

Metropolitan Areas in the Czech Republic - Definitions, Basic Characteristics, Patterns of Suburbanisation and Their Impact on Political Behaviour

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Metropolitan Areas in the Czech Republic – Definitions, Basic Characteristics, Patterns of Suburbanisation and Their Impact on Political Behaviour

Tomáš Kostecký, Daniel Čermák

Abstract

This study is based on the first stage of research on political change in metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic, conducted within the framework of the International Metropolitan Observatory Project (IMO). In the first part of the study the authors examine how metropolitan areas are defined. Given that there is currently no official definition of metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic, the criteria for their delineation were developed on the basis of existing definitions of metropolitan areas in other countries participating in the IMO project and with the use of available data. The application of these criteria to the Czech Republic produced the "provisional" delineation of four metropolitan areas within the country, centred on the cities of Prague, Brno, Pilsen, and Ostrava. The basic characteristics of these four metropolitan areas are outlined in the second part of the paper with data on populations and population density, migration patterns, housing development, and basic data on spatial differences in social structures. Special attention is devoted to the process of suburbanisation as it evolved in the post-communist period, and patterns of the process are compared with the "typical" North American model. The authors conclude the paper with a study of selected aspects of political behaviour in relation to socio-spatial changes in the metropolitan areas.

Keywords

Metropolitan areas, definition, suburbanisation, social change, political change

Metropolitní oblasti v České republice - definice, základní charakteristiky, suburbanizace a její vliv na politické chování

Tomáš Kostecký, Daniel Čermák

Abstrakt

Text představuje výsledek první fáze českého týmu na projektu výzkumu politických změn v metropolitních oblastech, který je organizován v rámci mezinárodního výzkumného konsorcia International Metropolitan Observatory Project (IMO). Text se nejdříve zabývá problémem definice metropolitních oblastí. Protože v současné době neexistuje v České republice žádná oficiální definice metropolitních oblastí, byla vyvinuta vlastní definice kompatibilní s kritérii IMO projektu, a podle ní byly vymezeny čtyři metropolitní oblasti s jádrovými městy Praha, Brno, Ostrava a Plzeň a jejich zázemím. Text podává přehled o vývoji základních charakteristik takto vymezených metropolitních oblastí, zvláště o jejich populaci, hustotě obyvatel, vzorcích migrace a dojížděky a sociálně prostorových změnách. Zvláštní pozornost je věnována popisu procesu suburbanizace v období po pádu komunismu. Modely suburbanizace jsou porovnávány s „klasickým“ severoamerickým modelem. V závěrečné části textu jsou studovány vybrané aspekty politického chování obyvatel metropolitních oblastí ve vztahu k jejich sociálně-prostorovému vývoji.

Klíčová slova

metropolitní oblasti, definice, suburbanizace, sociální změny, politické změny

Metropolregionen in der Tschechischen Republik - Definition, Hauptmerkmale, Suburbanisierung und ihr Einfluss auf das politische Verhalten

Tomáš Kostecký, Daniel Čermák

Abstraktum

Der Text stellt das Ergebnis der ersten Arbeitsphase eines tschechischen Teams vor, das im Rahmen des internationalen Forschungskonsortiums Metropolitan Observatory Project (IMO) an einem Projekt zur Untersuchung politischer Veränderungen in Metropolregionen arbeitet. Die Abhandlung beschäftigt sich zunächst mit dem Problem der Definition von Metropolregionen. Da zur Zeit in der Tschechischen Republik keine offizielle Definition von Metropolregionen existiert, wurde eine eigene Definition entwickelt, die mit den Kriterien des IMO-Projekts kompatibel ist und nach der in Tschechien vier Metropolregionen - die Kernstädte Prag, Brunn, Ostrau und Pilsen und deren Umland - eingeteilt wurden. Der Text bietet einen Überblick über die Hauptmerkmale dieser Metropolregionen, insbesondere ihrer Population, der Bevölkerungsdichte, der Migrations- und Pendelmuster sowie der sozialräumlichen Veränderungen. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit wird der Beschreibung des Prozesses der Suburbanisierung in der Zeit nach dem Sturz des Kommunismus gewidmet. Die Modelle der Suburbanisierung werden mit dem "klassischen" nordamerikanischen Modell verglichen. Im abschließenden Teil des Textes werden ausgewählte Aspekte des politischen Verhaltens der Bewohner von Metropolregionen im Verhältnis zur sozialräumlichen Entwicklung untersucht.

Schlüsselwörter

Metropolregionen, Definition, Suburbanisierung, soziale Veränderungen, politische Veränderungen

Introduction

The aim of this text is to summarise the information about the metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic that relates to the study of political change in the metropolis as it is being developed under the framework of International Metropolitan Observatory Project (IMO). The text represents only a basic introduction to the issue of the political aspects and consequences of the development of the metropolitan areas. This introductory study will be followed by a series of other studies that will concentrate on other relevant topics, namely the socio-spatial polarisation within the large core cities of metropolitan areas, the political behaviour of inhabitants of metropolitan areas, political fragmentation and metropolitan governance.

In the first part, the paper deals with the definitions of the metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic. As there is currently no official definition of the metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic, the criteria for the delineation of the metropolitan areas are developed and tested taking into account existing definitions of metropolitan areas in the other countries participating in the IMO project and available data. Such 'preliminary' criteria are consequently applied in the existing Czech context to the 'provisional' delineation of the metropolitan areas. The basic characteristics of the four metropolitan areas are then presented, including data on population, density, migration patterns, housing development and the basic data on space differences in social structures. The basic process of suburbanisation is described, with emphasis on the development in the post-communist period. Patterns of suburbanisation are compared with the "classical" North American model, which serves as a sort of benchmark within the framework of the International Metropolitan Observatory project. Finally, the political consequences of the socio-spatial changes in the metropolitan areas are studied.

1. Basic Characteristics of Metropolitan Areas in the Czech Republic

1.1 The problem of definition

It has long been the good habit of scientists (although more so among natural scientists than among social scientists) to start any paper by providing definitions of the terms to be used in order to be absolutely clear before the substantive results of the research are presented. Following this tradition too rigorously when writing about metropolitan areas is a somewhat dangerous strategy, as the scope of the any scientific paper has to be limited while the problem of the definition of metropolitan areas itself could easily give researchers enough material to write a thick book without arriving at a 'clear definition' of the term. This is not surprising. As William Frey and Zachary Zimmer (2001) pointed out, it is increasingly difficult to find a commonly accepted definition of the city itself. Intuitive spatial definitions of the 'city' as the place of physical concentrations of people and their activities, which were used successfully for a long time, are less and less useful. The 'negative' definitions of cities as the 'opposites of the agricultural countryside' are no longer valid, and the sharp and deep decrease of the agricultural population has made practically all population 'non-agricultural' in most developed countries. The spatial spread of the urbanised areas, continuing suburbanisation, intensifying commuting from the countryside to the cities and among the suburbs, and the spread of the 'typical urban way of life' to the countryside altogether make the city boundaries less clear than ever before. If to define the city is difficult, to define the metropolitan area that can intuitively be outlined as the 'city and the surrounding area closely connected with it' is even more complicated. If the city is to be defined, one can at least borrow the administrative definition of the city as the territory under the jurisdiction of the respective City Council. As far as the metropolitan areas in the contemporary Czech Republic are concerned, neither an official definition of the metropolitan area nor any administrative units that would cover the metropolitan areas exist today.

Historically, the current situation is somewhat untypical. Soon after the establishment of independent Czechoslovakia in 1918, the Czechoslovak Statistical Office conducted a population Census (*Sčítání lidu 1921*). In that first Census under Czechoslovak rule the statistical office already defined 'residential agglomerations' (*sídelní aglomerace*) that were used for urban planning purposes. After the Communist coup d'état in 1948, the new government changed the whole system of territorial administration and self-government. Independent municipal self-government was abolished in practice, individual city councils were transformed into soviet type 'national committees' that were nothing more than territorial branches of the totalitarian state fully subordinate to the central governments directives. The same was true for the all other types of self-government on the higher territorial levels. Urban and regional planning was incorporated into the central planning system and changed its form from 'regulating the spatial development' to 'constructing the spatial development' in the country. The planning procedures generally, including all forms of spatial planning, became the key tool for the implementation of the state policies, which were directed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party. As most development under Communism was planned development and very little room was left for spontaneous development, the planning procedures soon became a highly politically sensitive exercise. Administrative and political regionalisation is always a highly political issue in any country. The same was true in Czechoslovakia under Commu-

nism, as different solutions could mean that different territories would either be ‘in’ or ‘out’ of the zone of major state investment (either industrial, infrastructural, or residential). Thus, the political struggles among local and regional party officials, the state administrators along with the naturally varying opinions of different groups of experts involved in the definition of the residential agglomerations, led to the fact that the delineation of residential agglomerations tended to change quite often. Ouředníček (2002) mentioned the important fact that residential agglomerations were not stable spatial units also because they were mostly delineated ad hoc for individual planning tasks. In his study of the Prague Urban Region, Ouředníček (2002) listed basic characteristics of seven different solutions that were used to define the ‘Urbanised Area of Prague’ during the Communist period.

It is clear from the table that the urbanised area of Prague was delineated in a very different way in different cases. Although the table seems to document the rise of the Prague metropolitan area, the fact is that the increase of its population size in the subsequent years is rather a reflection of the inclusion of a larger area surrounding Prague in the metropolitan area than it is a reflection of the rise of the metropolis itself. In addition to the above-mentioned definitions of metropolitan areas for planning purposes, several scientists devoted their time and effort to development criteria that could be used for more ‘scientifically rigorous’ definitions of metropolitan areas. A group of geographers working in the Institute of Economy of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences did pioneering work in 1961. They defined the metropolitan areas on the basis of their population size, economic structure (less than 15% of people working in agriculture), and the compactness of the built up area (more than 200 inhabitants per square km and more than 100 inhabitants per hectare of built up area). Later, the Czechoslovak Statistical Office defined ‘agglomerated municipalities’ as those that are functionally connected with a bigger municipality while having more than about 2000 inhabitants, a population density of built up areas higher than 70 inhabitants per hectare, at least 10% of houses containing three or more separate flats, and at least some part of the municipality equipped with municipal drinking water and sewage systems.

Another geographer, university professor J. Korčák (1966), used purely morphological criteria for delineating the metropolitan areas. He demarcated ‘areas of the highest population density’ (*areály maximálního zalidnění*). First, he decided which municipalities (the biggest cities) will be considered the core cities of the metropolitan areas and calculated the population density for them. In the second step he ‘merged’ the core with one adjacent municipality into the ‘area of the highest population density’ and calculated both population size and the area of this amalgamated territorial unit. From the dozens of adjacent municipalities he chose the one that, combined with the core city, constituted the territorial unit of the highest possible population density. In the following step,

Table 1. Basic characteristics of different solutions used to define the ‘Urbanised Area of Prague’ during the Communist period

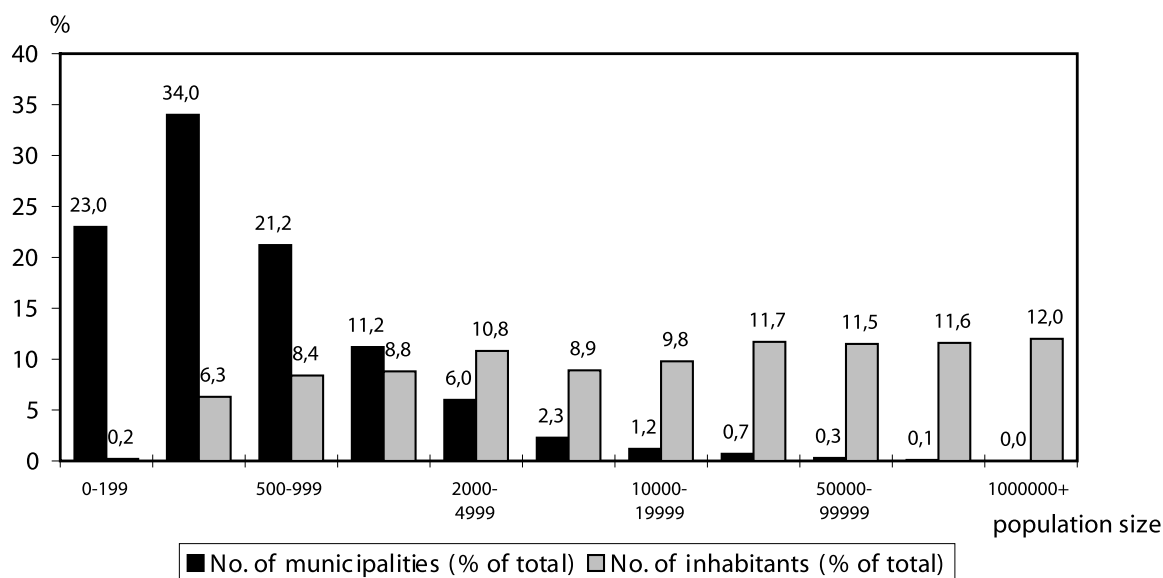
The name of the ‘urbanized area’	Area (km ²)	Population (thousands)	Density per 1 km ²	Year
Prague Agglomeration	280	1069	3813	1962, 1965
Metropolitan Area	3107	1561	502	1970, 1971
Prague-Central Bohemian Agglomeration	2780	1580	568	1976
Prague-Central Bohemian Agglomeration	3640	1680	460	1983
Prague Agglomeration	3350	1600	478	1983
Prague-Central Bohemian Agglomeration	2990	1614	540	1984
Prague-Central Bohemian Agglomeration	4116	1736	422	1986

Source: Ouředníček 2002.

Korčák merged the amalgamated territorial unit with another adjacent municipality that met the above-mentioned criterion and repeated the same algorithm again and again. In each step, the population size of the delineated area and the area and population density were recorded and used as data for line charts. In fact, Korčák was most interested in studying empirical data about population density, specifically inflexion points and other 'natural' breaking points in respective density charts. The empirically observed points in the density charts where the population either start to decrease quickly or fall under a certain level were used as the main criterion for the decision of at which step the amalgamation algorithm should be terminated. In the late 1980s, another group of university geographers (Hampl, Gardavský, Kuhn, 1987) analysed the entire settlement system and defined urbanised areas as functional systems of core cities and surrounding areas. The definition of urbanised areas was based on measuring the intensity of mutual relations (mostly commuting) between the core city and the surrounding municipalities.

The collapse of the Communist regime did not change the political system only on the national level but also represented an important breaking point for the system of territorial administration and local government. The very first steps of the new, post-Communist government included the abolishment of regions such as the units of territorial administration and the re-introduction of independent self-government on the municipal level. As a reaction to the previous programme of the forced amalgamation of small municipalities, people in small settlements often organised local referenda that resulted in many cases in their split from a larger municipality. Within the short period between 1990 and 1992, the number of municipalities on the territory of the Czech Republic increased from about 4000 to over 6000. Thus, the traditionally 'de-concentrated' settlement system, characterised by a large number of very small municipalities, has become even more administratively fragmented (see Chart 1).

Chart 1. The population size of municipalities in the Czech Republic in 1991



Source: Illner 1998.

Similarly, as a reaction to the over-planning during the Communist period, all types of planning, including regional and urban, came to be considered outdated and planning almost disappeared from the political agenda. Many institutions involved in regional planning were dissolved or privatised and subsequently transformed into development and engineering companies. The importance of urban planning departments in the administration of large cities decreased substantially. The situation started to change in the second half of the 1990s. First, the Ministry for Regional Development was established in 1996 and included also departments responsible for regional planning. The need to adjust the institutional framework to match that of the countries in the European Union in order to be able to obtain access to the Structural Funds became an important stimulus for development in this field. The key point in this respect was the (re-)introduction of self-government on the regional level in 2000. Newly created regions (*kraje*) became responsible for the territorial planning on their territories. Despite the recent developments there have been hardly any changes with regard to the definitions of the metropolitan areas. After browsing through existing documentation on the 'territorial plans of large territorial units', as indicated in an article by Markvart and Chmelař (2001), one could easily conclude that the traditional method of ad hoc delineation of metropolitan areas has remained unaltered, despite the recent political and administrative changes. Territorial plans of some urbanised areas do not exist at all. In cases where such plans exist, the delineation of the metropolitan area is mostly based on the agglomeration of several adjacent administrative districts within the core cities. In some cases, the authors of the territorial plans themselves mentioned that 'real metropolitan areas' as the functional units of the core city and its hinterland differ from the presented territories of 'large territorial units', but they justified their decisions about the delineation they used as a necessity in order to meet political demands. In other cases the authors of plans just followed the traditional patterns and used work with the same territory as the previous territorial plans did. In any case, definitions of metropolitan areas that are developed for the purpose of current territorial planning are not suitable for our purpose, mainly due to the fact that criteria used for their delineation are not consistent, and, thus, the results would not be comparable.

1.2 Definition of the metropolitan area used in this study

Faced with the lack of a consistent national definition of the metropolitan area, we were forced to develop our own set of criteria that could be then applied for the delineation of the metropolitan areas as the basic units of observation for IMO project. The first step was to decide which cities could be considered the core cities of metropolitan areas. In this respect, our choice has been strictly limited by the demand for the comparability of the Czech metropolitan areas with the metropolitan areas in the other states participating in the IMO project. As the minimum population size of such a metropolitan area was agreed at 200 000 inhabitants (core city and surrounding area combined), we have no other option but to include four core cities – Prague, Brno, Ostrava, and Pilsen. Although we are well aware that metropolisation processes can be observed in other cities in the Czech Republic, we have excluded them from our observations at this stage. The four chosen cities also differed from the other large cities by their administrative status. While all the other cities were just municipalities, Brno, Ostrava, and Pilsen have the dual status of both municipalities and administrative districts. The capital city of Prague has moreover the status of an administrative region (*kraj*).

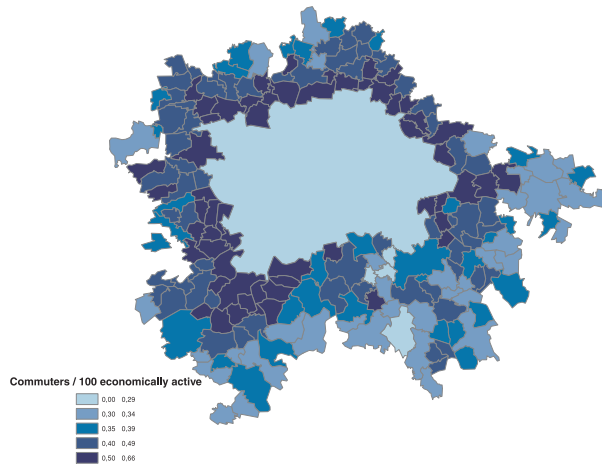
In the second step it was necessary to decide which municipalities surrounding the core cities should be considered suburban areas. Taking into account the available data on municipalities and their comparability with the criteria used in the other states participating in the IMO project, we decided to use the information on daily commuting, which seems to be a relatively good measure of the intensity of contacts between the inhabitants of the core cities and the suburban municipalities. Unfortunately, the data on commuting available at the beginning of 2004, when the preliminary definition of Czech metropolitan areas was being developed, were far from perfect. The data on commuting on the municipal level, published by the Czech Statistical Office at the time, described only the percentage of economically active local inhabitants with permanent residence in the municipality that commute to the other municipalities within the same district, to the other districts within the same region, and to the other regions. So we did not have access to information about the direction of commuting, and therefore, we were unable to determine the exact number of commuters from individual suburban municipalities to the core city. But 'fortunately', the core cities we chose were considered as separate administrative districts, and thus the number of commuters from the municipality 'to the other districts' (or 'to the other regions' in the case of the Prague hinterland) was a quite reliable albeit imperfect estimate of the ideal data on commuting flows from the suburban zone to the core city.¹ The other problem with the available statistics on commuting is that they are based on the difference between the municipality of permanent residence and the municipality where the workplace is located as declared in the Census. In the Czech Republic, however, the official 'permanent residence' of people need not necessarily be the place where the people actually live. It is probable that some of the new inhabitants of suburban areas who migrated from the central city may still have their permanent residence registered in the city. Thus, it is possible that the real intensity of commuting from suburban areas to core cities is somewhat underestimated in the official data.

The following set of maps (Maps 1a to 1d) show the intensity of daily commuting in the hinterland of the four selected core cities by individual municipalities. It is clear from the maps that the intensity of commuting is decreasing with the distance from the core city. The intensity of commuting in areas surrounding the core cities varies from about 20% to over 70%.

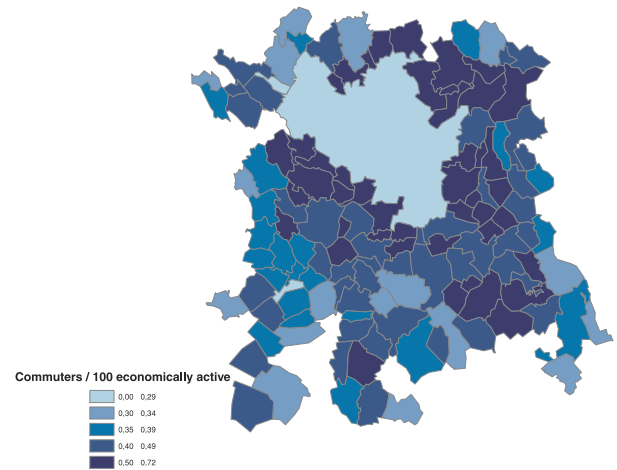
¹ We are well aware that the presented delineations of metropolitan areas are preliminary and must be improved through more careful elaboration of the new and more detailed data that are being gradually published by the Czech Statistical Office before the concluding stages of the project. We are confident, however, that such improvements in the delineation of the metropolitan areas studied will not alter the conclusions on the basic structures and the development of metropolitan areas that have been made on the basis of their preliminary delineations.

Maps 1a to 1d. Intensity of daily commuting in the hinterland of the four largest cities in the Czech Republic (No. of commuters per 100 economically active)

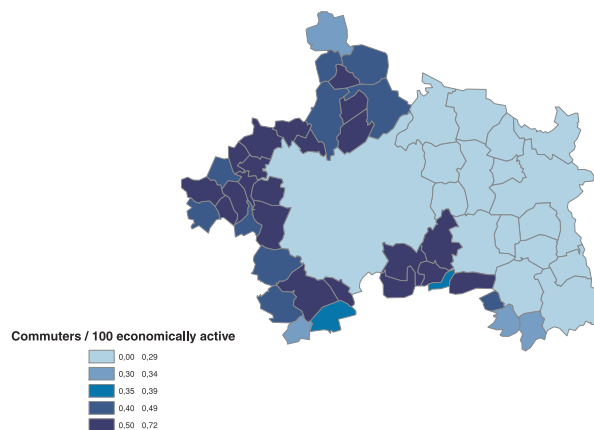
a) Prague



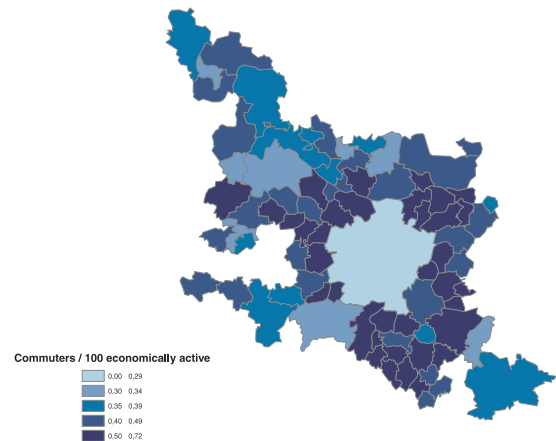
b) Brno



c) Ostrava



d) Pilsen

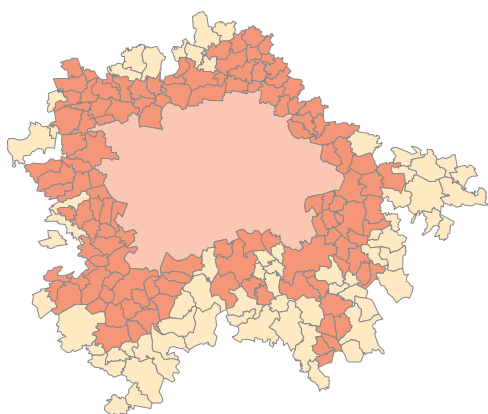


Source: Census 2001, Czech Statistical Office.

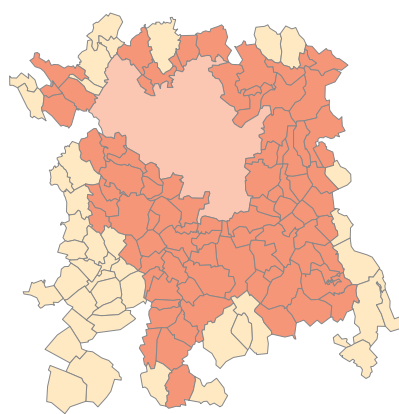
On the basis of daily commuting patterns we delineated two suburban zones - inner and outer. In the inner suburban zone we included all municipalities with more than 40% of daily commuters. In the outer suburban zone we incorporated all municipalities with between 30% and 40% of daily commuters. Some municipalities that had a percentage of commuters slightly below 30% were included in the outer suburban zone as well if it was necessary in order to keep the spatial contiguity of the covered suburban area.² In the case of the Ostrava metropolitan area, several larger industrial cities located east of Ostrava were included in the outer suburban zone of the Ostrava metropolitan region even if the share of commuters from these cities to Ostrava was lower. The reason for this was the functional dependence between Ostrava and these cities and the high intensity of mutual commuting among them as well as between them and the city of Ostrava. In this case it is not quite clear whether these cities should be considered suburbs of Ostrava or other cores of the Ostrava metropolitan region. The core cities with their delineated inner and outer suburban areas are displayed in the following set of maps.

Maps 2a to 2d. The core cities of the Czech metropolitan areas and the inner and outer suburban areas – preliminary delineation

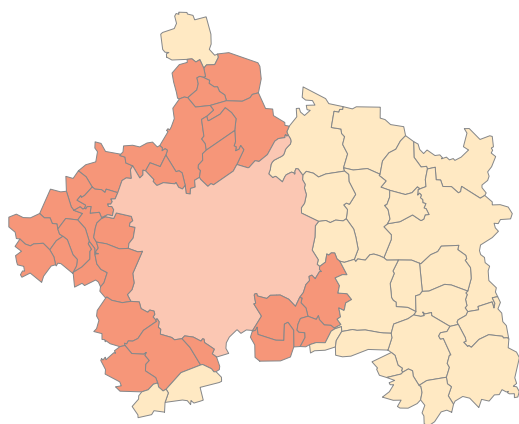
a) Prague



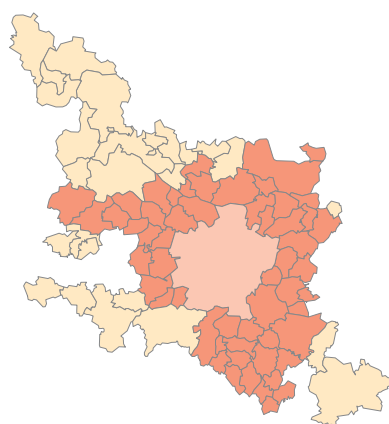
b) Brno



c) Ostrava



d) Pilsen



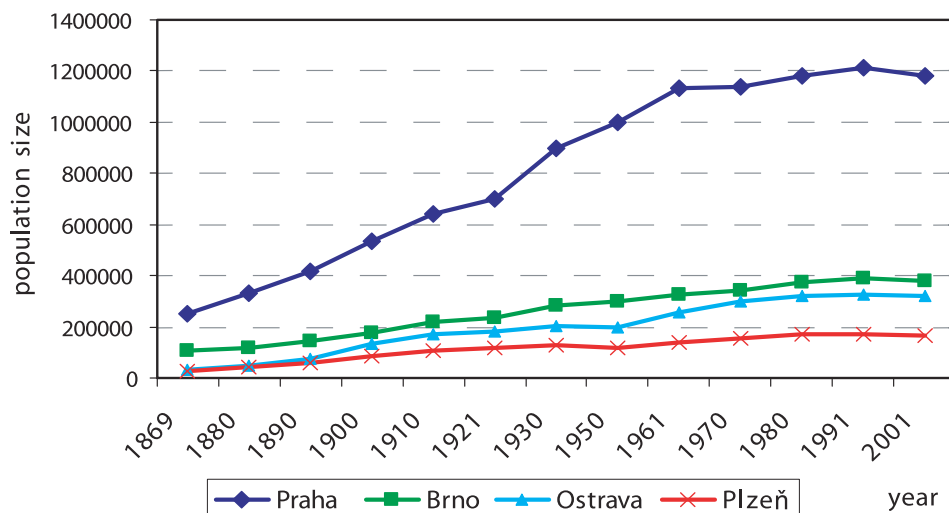
² The names of the municipalities are in the maps in the Appendix.

1.3 An overview of the historical development of metropolitan areas

The dramatic historical, economic and political changes that Central Europe underwent during the twentieth century deeply affected the development of the metropolitan areas as well. Up to the Second World War, large cities basically followed the traditional pattern of urban growth that was driven by industrial development and fuelled mainly by high immigration from the countryside. Charts 2 and 3 illustrate the population increase on the territories of the four chosen core cities.

Before interpreting the data it is necessary to make a methodological note. The data describing the population size of the core cities in 1961, 1970, 1980, 1991, and 2001 represent the actual population size of the cities within their administrative boundaries at the time of each census, while the older data do not. To avoid the problem of the frequent territorial changes in the administrative boundaries of the respective cities,³ we decided to use the data on population related to the period from 1869 to 1961 that came from the Retrospective Lexicon of Municipalities published by the Czech Statistical Office in 1978. These numbers represent the number of permanent residents living in the respective years within the administrative territory of the core cities as they were in effect on January 1st 1972. In fact, the actual population size of the core cities as the administrative units in the period between 1869 and 1950 was smaller than the presented data indicate, owing to the fact that their administrative areas are in fact smaller than in 1972. Thus, the growth of the core cities as administrative units was even higher in the period from 1869 to 1950 than the data in the charts suggest.

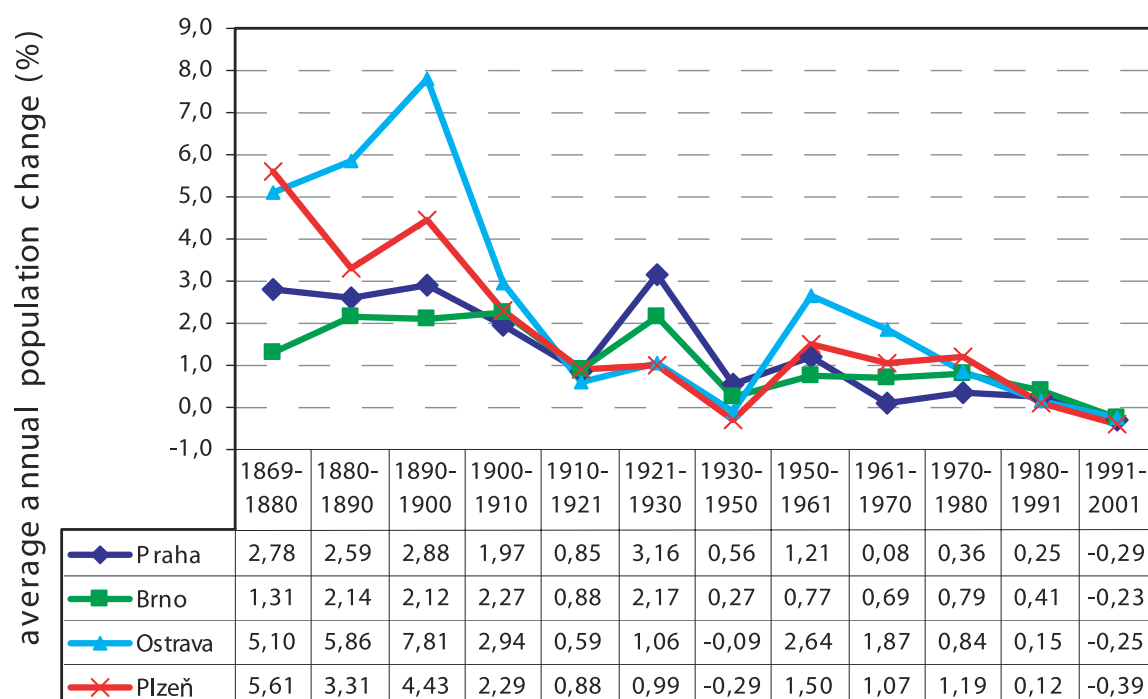
Chart 2. Population development on the territories of the core cities of the metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic in the period 1869-2001



Source: Population censuses, Czech (Czechoslovak) Statistical Office, Retrospective Lexicon of Municipalities.

³ The administrative development of the city of Prague could serve as a good example. Up to the end of the 18th century Prague did not exist as a single administrative unit but was rather an amalgam of several independent medieval cities. During the population boom connected with industrialisation in the 19th century, the city of Prague was surrounded by a number of rapidly growing industrial suburbs. Although many of those suburbs gradually amalgamated with the administrative city of Prague, until 1920, there still existed a huge gap between the territory of 'administrative' Prague and the much larger territory of the 'functional' city. Prague proper was encircled with independent cities and suburban villages with which together it formed one functional unit. For mostly political and fiscal reasons, the overdue administrative amalgamation was not implemented until 1920. In 1920, the Greater Prague Act (effective in 1922) was adopted. As a result, 37 adjacent towns and villages were incorporated to form Greater Prague. The resulting city area reached 172 km².

Chart 3. Average annual population growth/decline of the territories of the core cities of the metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic in the period 1961-2001



Source: Population censuses, Czech (Czechoslovak) Statistical Office, *Retrospective Lexicon of Municipalities*.

The overall growth rates were quite high in the period between 1869 and 1930. The largest city in the region was Prague, the traditional capital of the Czech Kingdom and the administrative centre of the Czech lands. The population growth of all four observed cities was mostly fuelled by the rapid development of industry and the large immigration flow from the rural, countryside areas. The fastest growing was Ostrava, formerly a rather small city, whose population boom followed the quick development of the Ostrava coalmines and steelworks. Chart 3 illustrates well how this rapid development was delayed by the onset of the First World War. After the establishment of independent Czechoslovakia in 1918, the most quickly developing in terms of population growth was Prague as the new capital of Czechoslovakia, and Brno, the administrative centre of historical Moravia. The Second World War represented another breakdown in city development. The cities of Ostrava and Pilsen even lost some population between 1930 and 1950. Under the Communist regime, the most quickly growing were again Ostrava and Pilsen, the centres of heavy industry. Compared to pre-war development, however, the Communist period witnessed the gradual slowdown of growth.

After the 1960s only very moderate population growth can be observed in the four largest cities. The aging population of the core cities together with the relatively low overall birth rates diminished the natural population growth. The decreasing intensity of 'communist industrialisation' reduced the demand for new industrial workers. Although the construction of large-scale blocks of state rental housing on the outer parts of the city territory provided a relatively high number of new flats, the overall supply of flats did not increase correspondingly, as the practical neglect of inves-

ting money into the maintenance of the old houses in the central parts of the cities resulted in large-scale losses of available older housing stock. Consequently, the limited supply of available housing prevented many potential migrants from the countryside from moving to the largest cities. The population stagnation was the most visible in Prague, where both the aging of the population and the lack of available housing was the most obvious. In fact, a substantial part of the Prague population increase during that period could be attributed to the enlargement of the administrative boundaries of the city in 1968 and 1974,⁴ which were pushed through by socialist urban planners in order to provide the city with potential construction sites for new pre-fab housing estates.

The development of socio-spatial structures within the metropolitan areas was complicated as well. The observed patterns of development basically followed those of large cities in the most industrialised European countries. Industrial development did not directly affect the historical downtowns, as most new factories were built in the then suburbs. Around new factories, blocks of flats were constructed, serving the housing needs of the rapidly growing urban working class. The remaining suburban zones around the historical cities were used as construction sites for more luxurious housing blocks for the rising middle and upper middle classes from among the professionals and small businessmen that morphologically reminded the compact historical city. The members of the highest social strata, like the successful owners of large factories or large tradesmen, started to move to the several exclusive garden cities that combined physical proximity to downtown with an environment of luxurious villas accompanied by spacious gardens and public parks. But the building of new residential areas for the middle and upper classes did not mean the social degradation of the historical downtowns. It is true that many buildings, especially in Prague, were gradually converted to office space and department stores, but the downtowns never lost their residential functions. The city centres remained attractive for rich people and substantial parts of them have undergone a sort of gentrification. Behind the historical facades, many historical houses were modernised or completely rebuilt. These processes, however, contributed to the rising socio-spatial polarisation within the cities as the poorer of the city centres were gradually forced to move to the city outskirts. Boháč (1923) noted that the influx of rich immigrants from the countryside resulted in the fact that in the gentrified historical downtown of Prague there lived a lower proportion of Prague natives than in any other part of the city. Pre-war Prague also had its slum-type neighborhoods, which were built unplanned on the edge of some of the working-class suburbs by Prague's poorest inhabitants and poorest immigrants.

The socio-spatial patterns of interwar Prague attracted the interest of many researchers and were studied in great detail for a long time (Ouředníček, 2002). Boháč (1923) described the concentric character of the socio-spatial patterns, with the oldest and the most well to do downtown, and the younger, poorer, and larger families living farther from the city centre. He also noted the ethnic structure of the city, which was dominated by the Czech population but comprised significant minorities of Jews and Germans. Minorities tended to concentrate into some sectors of the city but as they were heterogeneous socially, people of different social status lived in different concentric zones. Moschelesová (1937) used the data on the number of housemaids per 100 households and the number of workers out of the 100 economically active inhabitants from the 1930 Census to create a typology of Prague neighbourhoods. In the selected parts of downtown the number of housemaids per 100 households reached as high as 67, while in the peripheries this number declined to about 3. The share of workers among local economically active inhabitants exhibited basically an

⁴ In 1968, the new Greater Prague Act came into effect, representing a major extension of Prague's territory: 21 suburban villages were incorporated, the resulting city area increased to 297 km². In 1974, the most recent extension of the city area occurred: 30 suburban towns and villages were incorporated together with vast tracks of agricultural land. The area of the city has reached 497 km².

inverted pattern. While in the richest part of downtown the share of workers was as low as 13%, in some peripheral neighbourhoods it was as high as 70%.

Generally, Moschelesová's analysis gave a good indication of the concentric character of the social polarisation in the city. The only exception to this general rule can be observed in the development of a few suburban garden cities outside of the administrative boundaries of the city that were built during the 1920s and 1930s (Ryšavý, Link, Velíšková, 1994). The building of these settlements, however, only partially followed the North American model of suburbanisation. It became limited both spatially and socially. Suburbs of that type were built almost exclusively within the few corridors around the main railways lines. Socially it was limited to the richest inhabitants and by no means did it become standard for the middle class. The desire of the middle class to escape from the congested urban environment to the beautiful nature around the cities was met rather through the development of 'vacation houses' and cottages that were built on a mass scale on cheap small lots farther from the centres of the cities. These 'second houses' were usually located within the weekly commuting distance from the large cities and were used for weekend recreation and vacations but were not resided in permanently. Similar development as described in the case of Prague was typical for other large cities in the interwar period as well, although the scope of the suburban development and the construction of second houses were smaller.

The events of the war changed the development of large cities quite dramatically. Although large Czech cities increased their population size during the war, sheltering first the Czech population from the Sudetenland and then the rising numbers of Germans, the war and post-war events led to a change in the pace of development. Birth rates declined substantially during the war. The Jewish minority was almost completely exterminated by the Nazis, while the majority of Germans were forced to leave the country after the war. Although the Czech cities were relatively less damaged by the war operations than many other European cities, tens of thousands of flats were still damaged or destroyed. Moreover, housing construction had practically ceased during the war and the early post-war period (Ouředníček, 2002), which resulted in a serious housing shortage. Soon after the war, the largest cities were smaller and ethnically practically homogeneous. The installation of the Communist government after the coup d'état in 1948, however, influenced the development of the cities even more profoundly in the long term than the war. Democratic institutions were abolished, democratic procedures in administration were abandoned, city administration was fully subjected to political goals, and the economy was almost entirely nationalised and subjected to the commands of planners. Under the pressure of the Moscow, economic plans directed the development toward the expansion of heavy industry, namely steel production, heavy machinery and the weapon industry. Equalisation policy intentionally channeled most of investment into the poorer parts of the Czechoslovakia (Kopačka 1994). The nationalisation of multi-flat rental houses and the control of the state over new housing construction gave planners very powerful tools for the direct administration of city development. As a consequence, the most rapid development, both in terms of investment and the population, was seen among the small and middle-sized cities that were the capitals of administrative districts (Hampl, Kuhn, 1993), while the development potential of many of the large cities, especially Prague, was artificially restricted. In this respect, the case of Ostrava was somewhat exceptional in that, as a centre of heavy industry, it continued to be a target of massive industrial development and, consequently, grew quite quickly in terms of population in the 1950s and 1960s.

Traditional social structures were deeply affected by the policies of the Communist government, with the consequences visible also at the city level. The members of the former bourgeoisie not only lost their companies but were very often also forced to move out of their dwellings. Many

villas or large downtown flats were divided into numerous housing units, and these 'new flats' were distributed to new tenants. Thus, many members of the lower social strata moved into the neighbourhoods that would normally have been inaccessible to them and they mixed there with the local population. Neglect of the maintenance of the old housing stock resulted in the gradual degradation of some downtown neighborhoods, both in terms of the quality of dwellings and the attractiveness and the public image of the neighbourhood. The construction of new flats in the large cities concentrated on the building of pre-fab housing estates, which influenced both the morphological and the socio-spatial structures of the cities. In the beginning, the newly constructed blocks of flats were smaller projects and were usually built in areas adjacent to existing residential areas. From about the mid-1960s, the plans changed. The new blocks of flats were much bigger and were built as separate 'cities' farther from existing residential areas, connected with the downtowns by a dense network of public transport. The flats in the new housing estates were mostly inhabited by young families, established by both the local citizens and by the immigrants from countryside. The outer parts of the city thus had a generally younger population, while the inhabitants of the inner parts of the cities were getting older. As the young people had a generally higher level of education than the older generations, the overall social status of the inhabitants of the housing estates was relatively high and the social status of the population in the central parts of the cities was gradually declining in relative terms. It is true that some parts of the inner cities maintained their pre-war exclusiveness and attractiveness even during Communist times, but the traditional socio-spatial polarisation between the rich downtowns and the poorer outer zones of the city was attenuated (Matějů 1980).

The classic, North American type of suburbanisation practically did not occur under Communism. The construction of family homes was not supported, as planners favoured building multi-storey houses and preferred a higher population density in the new built-up areas. The supply of housing lots for the building of single-family homes was generally rather limited. Without mortgages to cover the construction costs of a single-family home it was beyond the financial possibilities of most families. Underdeveloped municipalities in the hinterland of the core cities lacking both technical infrastructure and social prestige were not attractive for the rich. Moreover, the nationalisation of the land and the state control of its price resulted in the paradoxical fact that the building lots were provided by the state at a price that was the same throughout the whole administrative territory of the city. Rich people (not very numerous anyway) interested in building a single-family home thus naturally rather sought to obtain a housing lot in the most prestigious neighbourhoods, like pre-war villa-type quarters or areas adjacent to them. Although Ryšavý, Link, and Velíšková (1994) mentioned that population growth in the hinterlands of large cities was generally larger than most of the core cities under Communism, this growth was limited to selected numbers of smaller towns that received large industrial investments and gained population mostly from higher birth rates and immigration from surrounding agricultural villages. Ouředníček (2002) considers such development to be the continuation of urbanisation rather than the suburbanisation of metropolitan areas, as it does not include substantial migration flows from the core cities to the suburban settlements. At the end of Communism the Czech metropolitan regions were largely socially and ethnically homogenised, in contrast to any Western metropolis. Core cities had rather deteriorated downtowns, and municipalities in the hinterland of core cities were generally underdeveloped. For more detailed information about the socio-spatial structures in the Metropolitan Areas in the Czech Republic, both historical and contemporary, see Musil (1968, 1985, 1987, 1992), Matějů (1979), Horská (2002), Balík (2003) and Steinführer (2003).

1.4 Basic data about current metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic

The following table presents some basic data about the four largest metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic.

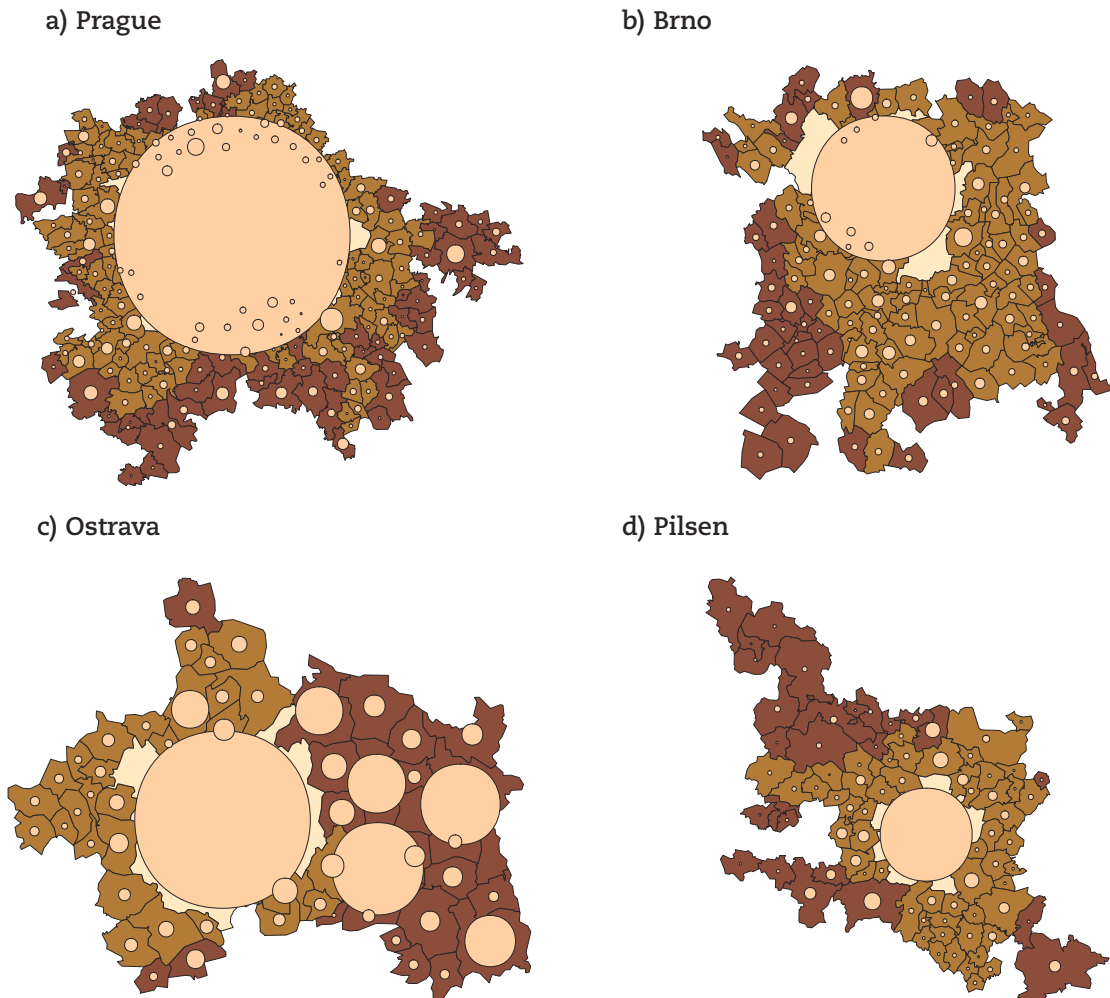
Table 2. Selected structural characteristics of the four largest metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic in the 2001

	Population size	Area (km ²)	Population density	Average population size of municipality	Number of municipalities	Population change between 1991 and 2001 (%)
Prague core city	1169106	496	2357	1169106	1	-3,7
Suburban zone total	174073	1292	135	884	197	7,2
- inner	118084	750	157	895	132	8,9
- outer	55989	542	103	861	65	3,6
Prague metropolitan area total	1343179	3080	751	6784	198	-2,4
Brno core city	376172	230	1636	376172	1	-3,1
Suburban zone total	138697	1163	119	1051	132	2,9
- inner	99890	744	134	1122	89	2,4
- outer	38807	419	93	902	43	4,3
Brno metropolitan area total	514869	2556	370	3871	133	-1,6
Ostrava core city	316744	214	1480	316744	1	-3,2
Suburban zone total	355203	669	531	6702	53	-1,4
- inner	64978	289	225	2241	29	-1,4
- outer	290225	380	764	12093	24	-1,4
Ostrava metropolitan area total	671947	1552	761	12443	54	-2,3
Pilsen core city	165259	125	1322	165259	1	-4,5
Suburban zone total	68431	884	77	845	81	1,6
- inner	44537	454	98	810	55	0,7
- outer	23894	430	56	919	26	3,3
Pilsen metropolitan area total	233690	1893	232	2850	82	-2,8

Source: Own calculations based on Census 2001 and Census 1991, Czech Statistical Office.

Differences in population size among the core cities as well as between the core cities and sub-urban municipalities in their hinterlands are illustrated graphically in the following set of maps.

Maps 3a to 3d. Population size of the core cities and the individual municipalities in the suburban area in the four largest Czech metropolitan areas in 2001



Source: Census 2001, Czech Statistical Office.

The metropolitan area of Prague is the largest such area, with a total population far exceeding one million. However, the Prague core city itself comprises almost 90% of the total population. The municipalities in the Prague suburban area are very small and the population density is low. The Brno metropolitan area has slightly over half a million inhabitants, three-quarters of them living in the core city. Though the suburban municipalities are somewhat bigger than those around Prague, they are generally quite small, too. The Ostrava metropolitan area differs from the other three in many respects. It is the only metropolitan area where the core city is not dominant in terms of population size. The municipalities in its suburban zone are on average much bigger than those in the other suburban zones, and the municipalities are less numerous. While some of them have

a mostly residential function, despite their population size (e.g. the city of Havířov with over 90 000 inhabitants, and also Hlučín, Vratimov, Šenov), the others (Karviná, Orlová, Bohumín) are themselves important industrial centres that attract commuters from the entire metropolitan area. The overall population size of the Ostrava suburban area is quite large, and so is the population density. The settlement structure in the Ostrava metropolitan region is more complicated than that of the other metropolitan regions, reflecting the historical development of the Ostrava industrial coal basin, where for a long time there was no dominant core city, and the city of Ostrava acquired this position only relatively recently (in the late 19th century). The metropolitan area of Pilsen is far smaller than the three others. Structurally, it is similar to that of Brno and Prague, with the dominating core city surrounded by a large number of small suburban municipalities.

The basic characteristics of the social and demographic composition of the population living in Czech metropolitan areas are summarised in the following table.

Table 3. Selected characteristics of the social and demographic composition of the inhabitants of the four largest metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic in the 2001

	Economically active per 100 inhabitants	Children (0-14) per 100 inhabitants	Elderly (65 +) per 100 inhabitants	Employed in agriculture per 100 economically active	University educated per 100 inhabitants over 15 years
Prague core city	54,3	13,4	16,2	0,6	18,8
Suburban zone total	53,1	15,9	14,4	2,9	9,9
- inner	53,2	15,8	14,6	2,7	10,9
- outer	53,1	16,2	14,0	3,4	7,8
Prague metropolitan area total	54,2	13,7	16,0	0,9	17,7
Brno core city	51,7	14,4	15,7	1,0	17,9
Suburban zone total	49,7	16,8	14,5	6,3	6,7
- inner	49,8	16,5	14,7	5,6	7,0
- outer	49,2	17,5	14,0	8,3	6,0
Brno metropolitan area total	51,1	15,0	15,3	2,4	15,0
Ostrava core city	50,6	16,4	12,7	0,6	10,5
Suburban zone total	48,7	17,0	12,4	1,3	6,6
- inner	48,6	16,2	14,2	3,1	7,3
- outer	48,7	17,2	12,0	0,8	6,4
Ostrava metropolitan area total	49,6	16,7	12,5	0,9	8,4
Pilsen core city	52,7	14,1	15,1	0,9	12,5
Suburban zone total	51,6	16,3	14,2	5,4	5,9
- inner	51,8	15,4	14,8	4,4	6,8
- outer	51,3	17,9	13,1	7,1	4,1
Pilsen metropolitan area total	52,4	14,7	14,8	2,2	10,6

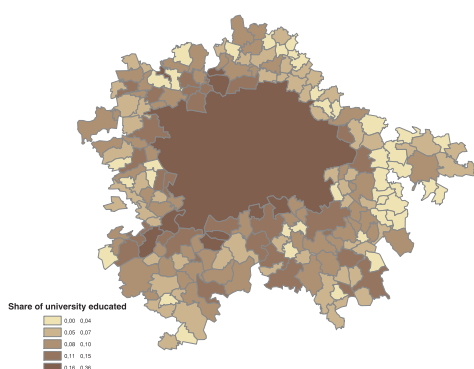
Source: Own calculations based on Census 2001, Czech Statistical Office.

The important message from the table is that the differences are small in most cases. This is true for the differences among the metropolitan areas as well as for the differences between the core cities and the suburban zones. The share of economically active population is slightly higher in the core cities than in the suburban zones. The highest economic activity is in Prague, the lowest

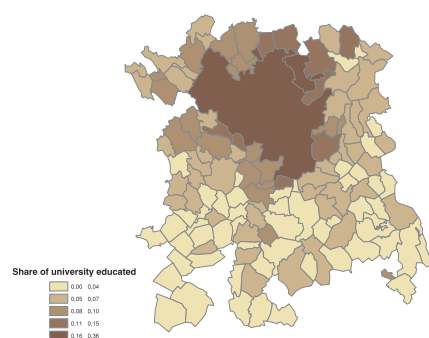
in the Ostrava metropolitan area. The Prague metropolitan area, specifically its core city, has the oldest population, but the differences between Prague and other cities are not too big. The numbers in the table indicate the minor importance of agriculture in the local economies of the metropolitan areas. Agricultural employment is very low in the hinterlands of Prague and Ostrava, while a somewhat higher share of those employed in agriculture can be found around Brno and Pilsen. More important differences can be found when one looks at the education of the population. Generally, the core cities have substantially more educated inhabitants than the municipalities in the suburban zones. At the same time Prague and Brno have a substantially higher share of university-educated people than Pilsen and Ostrava. The share of university – educated in suburban zones is generally small, even in the suburban areas surrounding Prague. The following set of maps show the share of university-educated inhabitants by individual municipalities in the metropolitan areas.

Maps 4a to 4d. The share of university-educated inhabitants in the core cities and the individual municipalities in the suburban areas in the four largest Czech metropolitan areas in 2001

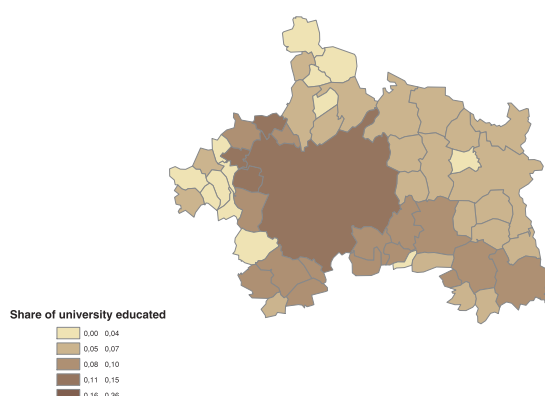
a) Prague



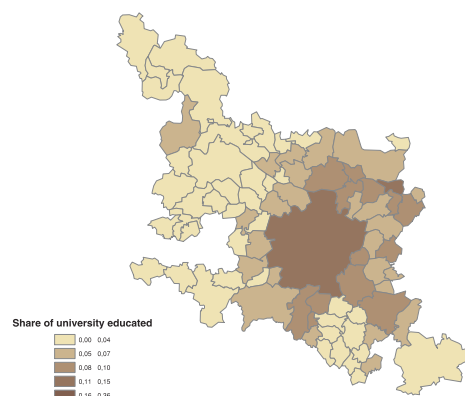
b) Brno



c) Ostrava



d) Pilsen



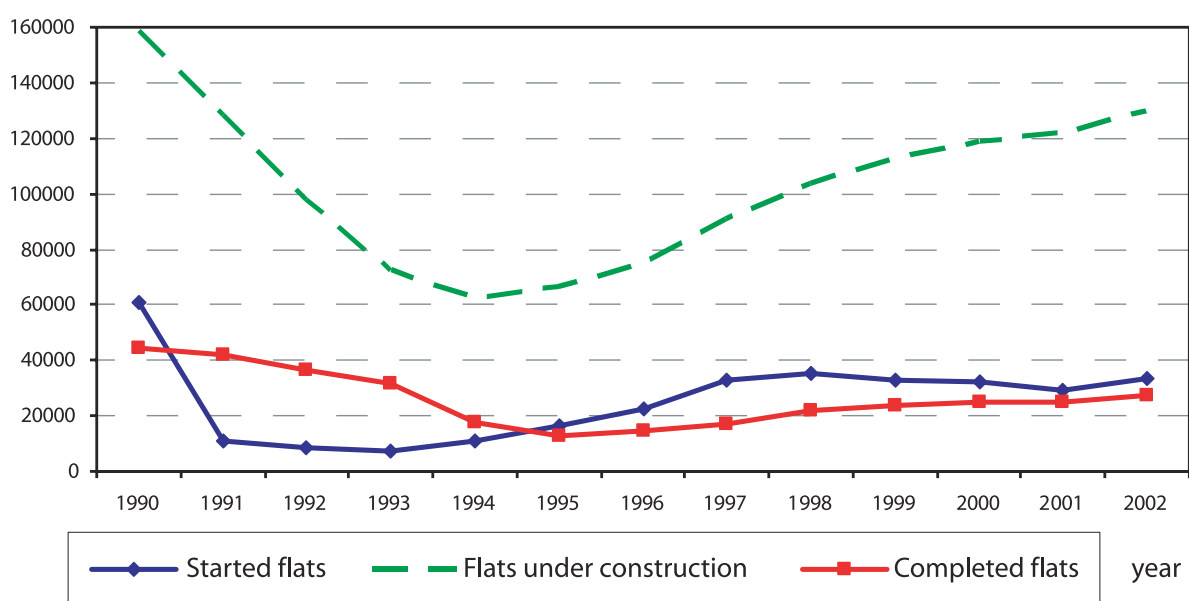
Source: Census 2001, Czech Statistical Office.

The share of university-educated people in suburban municipalities in all the metropolitan areas increases with proximity to the core city; the farther from the city, the lower the educational level of the local population. A suburban area around Prague has generally more educated inhabitants than those surrounding the other core cities.

2. Metropolitan Change after Communism – What Patterns Can Be Observed?

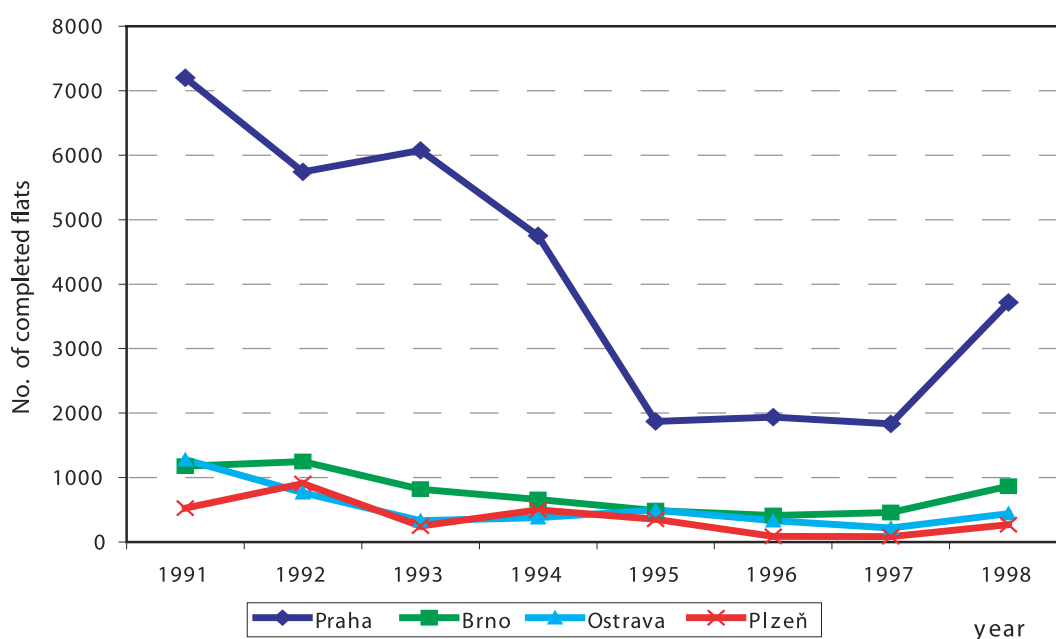
The sudden and, to a great extent, unanticipated breakdown of the Communist regime was followed by many dramatic changes in Czech society. The re-establishment of the market economy included some steps that were of particular importance for the future development of the metropolitan areas, namely the termination of the construction of rental housing by the state, the liberalisation of the price of real estate and land, the restitution of the older rental houses into the hands of former owners, and the privatisation of all retail premises and the majority of industrial companies. Within a few years after the change of government, the construction of new dwellings had decreased rapidly as the discontinuation of state investment into the construction of new housing was not replaced by private investment (see next chart).

Chart 4. Housing construction in the Czech Republic in the period 1990-2002 – the absolute number of flats completed, started, and under construction



Source: Czech Statistical Office.

Housing construction in the largest Czech cities basically followed the general trend. It sharply decreased at the beginning of the 1990s, bottomed out around the mid-1990s, and then somewhat increased but did not reach pre-1989 levels (see Chart 5).

Chart 5. Housing construction in the core cities of the metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic in the period 1991-1998 – absolute number of completed dwellings

Source: Andrlé 1999.

As a consequence, the prices in housing generally increased with a speed surpassing the general level of inflation. The re-introduction of the market evaluation of the land prices also resulted in the emergence of dramatic differences in land value, both among different regions in the Czech Republic (Kostelecký 2000), and within the metropolitan areas and their core cities themselves (Ouředníček 2002). As the prices of available building lots in the most attractive parts (mainly downtowns, pre-war middle class residential areas, and villa quarters close to the city centres) of the cities skyrocketed, there surfaced strong economic pressure for the conversion of the existing residential housing stock in the central parts of cities into retail and office premises (Enyedi 1998; Matlovič, Ira, Sýkora, Szczyrba 2002). Although the existing building code limited the freedom of building owners to transform flats into offices or shops, such conversions have always existed to some extent despite regulation. The results of Census 2001 demonstrated that the number of dwelling units in the central parts of large cities generally decreased. The figures in the following table document this claim in the case of Prague.

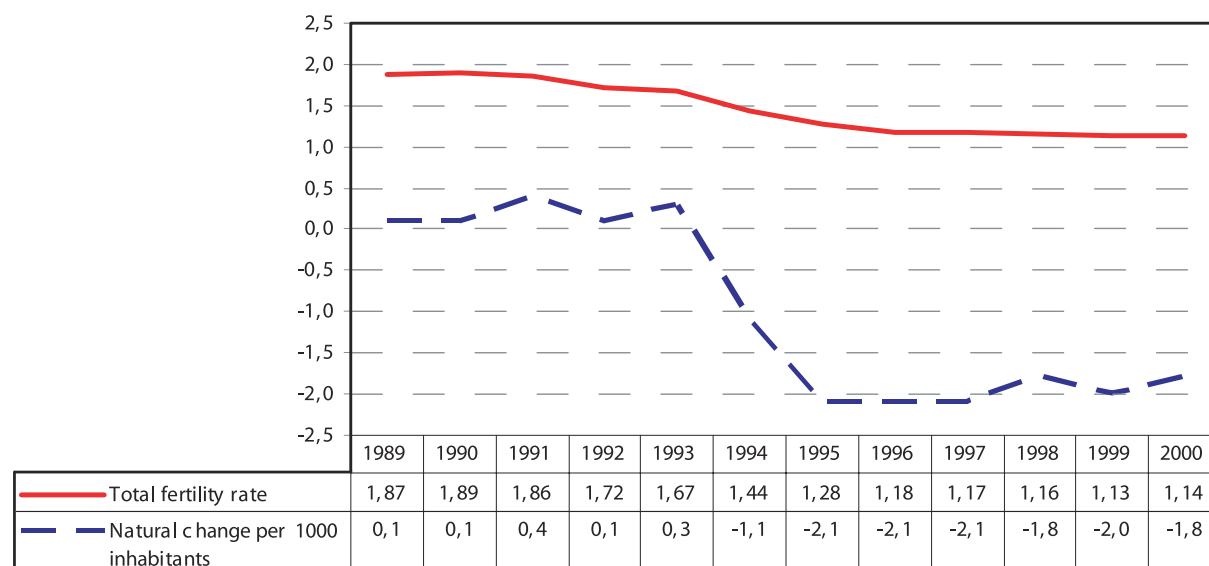
Table 4. Number of flats for residential use at the time of Census 1991 and 2001 in Prague and its centre

	1991	2001	Change 2001/1991 (in %)
Prague 1	17 701	15 164	-14,3
Prague 2	26 168	23 128	-11,6
Prague 3	37 919	35 043	-7,6
City centre total	81 788	73 335	-10,3
The Capital Prague total	495 804	496 940	0,2

Source: Census 1991, Census 2001, Czech Statistical Office.

While observing the population development of the metropolitan areas one should bear in mind the overall population development in the Czech Republic.

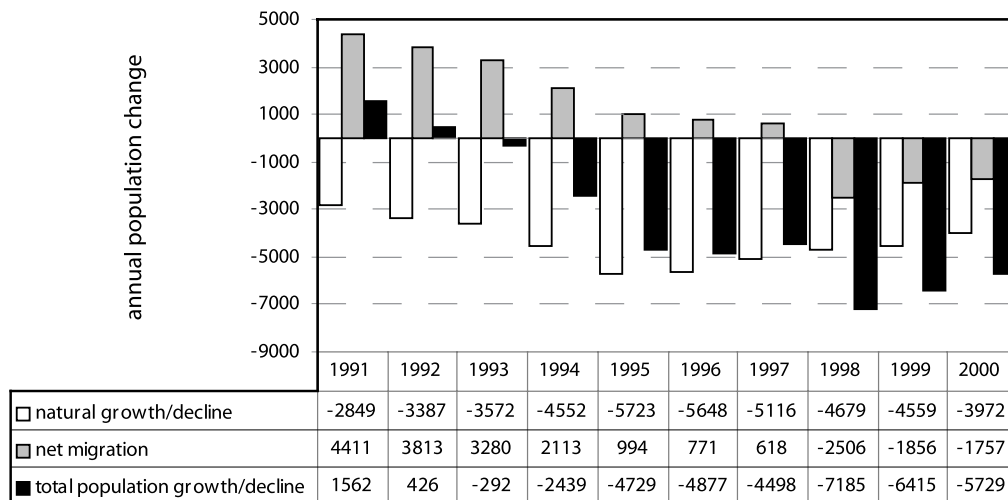
Chart 6. The natural population growth/decline and the total fertility rate in the Czech Republic in the period 1989-2000



Source: Czech Statistical Office.

The years following the Velvet Revolution in 1989 featured dramatically quick changes in the demographic behaviour of the Czech population. The already low total fertility rate decreased within a few years to very low levels comparable to only a few other countries in the world. As a consequence, the Czech Republic started to lose its population, as death rates exceeded birth rates. This was to some extent compensated by the growing immigration of foreigners, so the overall number of people living in the territory of the country stagnated. The population development of the delineated metropolitan areas basically followed the general trend of population stagnation/decline. The following set of charts shows the annual population growth/decline in the four core cities and their sources.

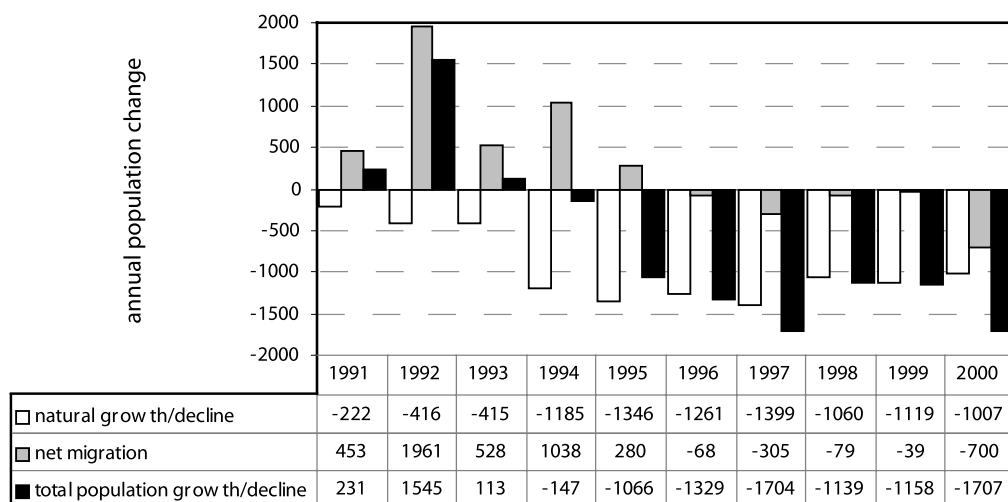
Chart 7. Annual population growth/decline in the city of Prague in the period 1991-2000 and its decomposition to natural growth and net migration



Source: Andrle 2001.

The City of Prague faced a natural decrease in inhabitants for the entire period under observation. As the birth rate decreased, the natural decrease in the population somewhat intensified between 1991 and 1995, but this change was not dramatic. The chart shows that the key factor underlying the switch from total population growth to total population decrease was the migration balance. The influx of immigrants to Prague, which had been moderate at the beginning of the 1990s, was soon surpassed by the numbers of people emigrating out of Prague. Thus, Prague started to lose its population, both through a natural decrease and through emigration from 1998.

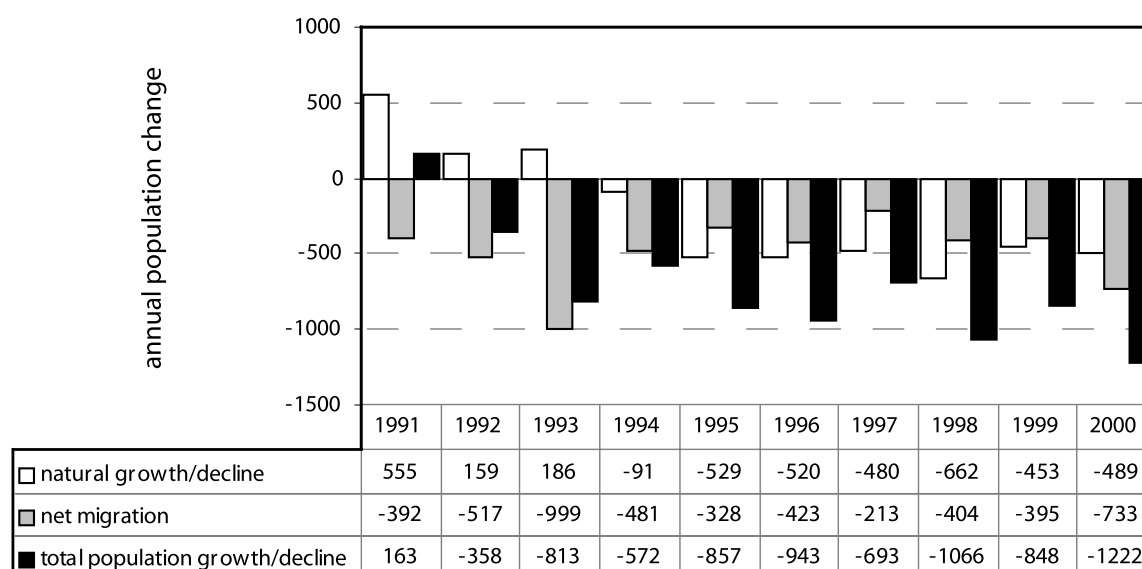
Chart 8. Annual population growth/decline in the city of Brno in the period 1991-2000 and its decomposition to natural growth and net migration



Source: Andrle 2001.

The population development in Brno was very similar to that in Prague. The natural decrease intensified during the 1990s and the migration balance changed from positive to negative in 1996.

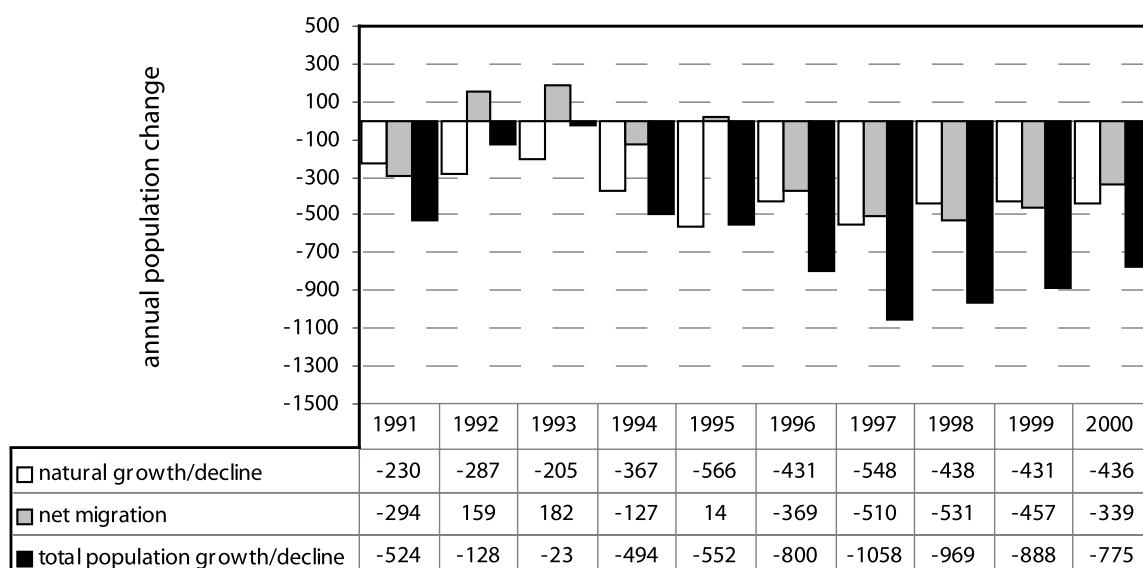
Chart 9. Annual population growth/decline in the city of Ostrava in the period 1991-2000 and its decomposition to natural growth and net migration



Source: Andrle 2001.

The population development of the Ostrava metropolitan region differed from that of the previous two metropolitan areas to some extent. Due to its image as a dirty industrial city that was already facing economic problems in the 1980s, Ostrava was not very attractive for immigrants, and it was losing its population through emigration even before the collapse of Communism. The outflow of migrants from Ostrava remained quite stable after 1989. The general population decline in the 1990s was mainly attributable to the sharp decrease in the birth rate and the ensuing natural decline in the population.

Chart 10. Annual population growth/decline in the city of Pilsen in the period 1991-2000 and its decomposition to natural growth and net migration



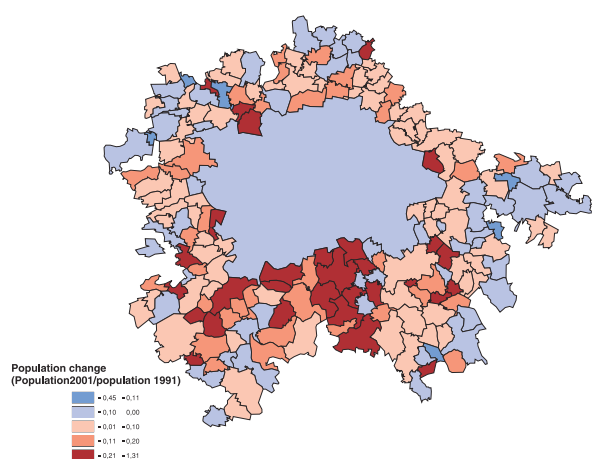
Source: Andrle 2001.

The core city of the Pilsen metropolitan area was losing population both through a natural decrease and through out-migration during almost the entire period under observation. The only exceptions were the migration gains in 1992, 1993, and 1995, which were, however, negligible in terms of absolute numbers.

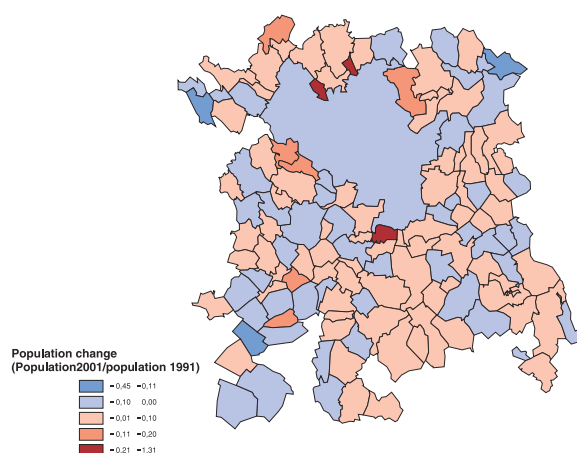
The overall population change in the core cities and the suburban areas between 1991 and 2001 by individual municipalities are documented in the following maps.

Maps 5a to 5d. The overall population change in the core cities and the individual municipalities in the suburban areas in the Czech metropolitan areas between 1991 and 2001

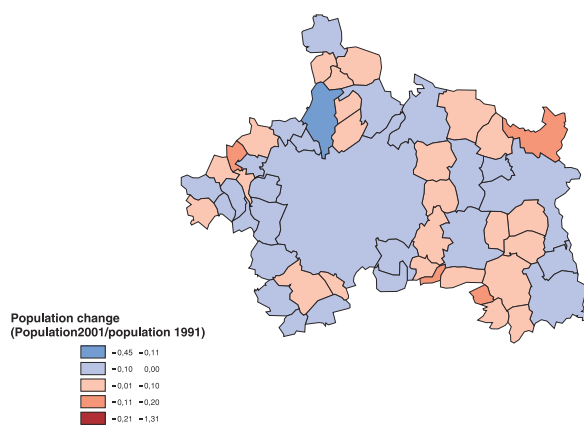
a) Prague



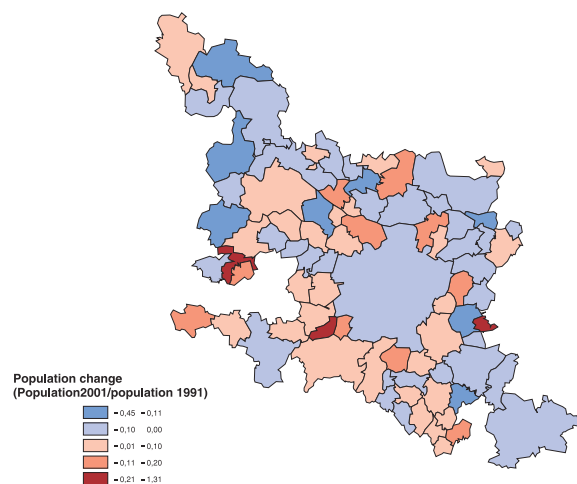
b) Brno



c) Ostrava



d) Pilsen



Source: Own computations based on Census 1991 and Census 2001, Czech Statistical Office.

While the population decline was typical for all core cities, the population development in the suburban areas of the metropolises was less uniform. Although we are not able to separate the effect of natural growth/decline from the migration balance in the total population change by individual municipalities due to a lack of data on the municipal level, it may be expected that the more important factor fuelling possible total population growth in suburban areas is immigration, specifically from the core city. What can we say about the development in suburban areas in terms of population change with the census data we have? First, there were substantial differences among individual metropolitan areas. While the population of suburban zones around Prague grew relatively quickly, the suburban growth around Brno and Pilsen was relatively moderate, and the suburban areas of Ostrava did not grow at all. Second, the population development in the hinterland of the core cities was spatially quite uneven. Some municipalities grew relatively quickly, some faced only moderate growth, and some declined.

The physical attractiveness of the natural environment played an important role. Thus, the population increase was highest in the hilly area south of Prague that is traditionally appreciated by the inhabitants of the Czech capital for its natural beauty. On the other side, it is interesting that the areas of higher suburban growth did not correspond to the main transportation lines, such as railways and highways. In some cases, the population growth on the level of individual suburban municipalities was quite rapid. Korner (2001) identified a limited number of municipalities in which the population growth exceeded 25% within the period 1991-2001, but he also noted that overall gains in these suburban zones of population growth could by no means compensate for the population decline of Prague. Both Korner (2001) and Ptáček (1997) also noticed that small municipalities in the hinterland of the core cities tended to grow more than the larger municipalities. In the Brno metropolitan area, suburban growth was not as spatially concentrated. The areas north and west of Brno, featuring a landscape similar to that of the southern suburbs of Prague, attracted more population than the areas of intensive agriculture that surround the city to the south and the east. Similarly, the areas of the highest suburban growth did not follow the most important transportation lines. The overall population increase in those suburban zones, however, was very limited. The same can be said about the growth in the suburban area surrounding Pilsen. The suburban growth in the Ostrava metropolitan area was concentrated in only a few less industrialised municipalities with a predominantly residential function.

Suburbanisation has always been connected with the construction of single-family homes. This was true also in the Czech Republic in the 1990s. Research on residential preferences proved that a single-family home is considered the ideal type of housing by the majority of the population (Lux et al. 2003), but the potential construction boom of single-family homes is to a large extent limited by the quite limited purchasing power of middle-class households and by high prices (Lux et al. 2002). Although the construction of family houses in the Czech metropolitan areas was not high in terms of absolute numbers, owing to the sharp decrease in housing construction of flats in real estate and other types of multi storey buildings, the relative share of family houses among the newly constructed dwellings increased (Andrle 1999), particularly in districts adjacent to the core cities of the observed metropolitan areas. But is important to mention also that quite a number of the single-family homes that were constructed in the 1990s in the observed metropolitan areas were built within the administrative boundaries of the core cities (Andrle 1999), though outside of the compact cities in the outer parts of the city's relatively large administrative boundaries. Thus, it is very important to keep in mind that part of the suburbanisation process is 'hidden' within the administrative boundaries of the core cities (Ptáček, 1997; Korner, 2001; Horáková, 2001; Mulíček, Olšová,

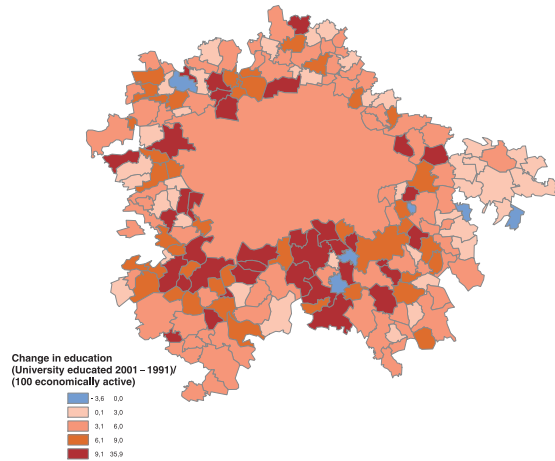
2002). This 'suburbanisation within the core city' warrants more attention in the next stages of the IMO project. It is an interesting process itself, as it combines some features of the North American-style suburbanisation with the Czech urbanisation process. This includes the rise of social segregation and the suburbanisation of life style, but at the same time it does not lead to the administrative and financial independence of the new residential areas and all the well-known negative consequences for the financial health of the core cities associated with this.

Alongside the fact that a portion of the potential residents of classic North American-type suburbs are building their family houses within the territory of the core city, 'proper suburbanisation', which includes out-migration from the core city to the administratively independent suburban municipality, can also be observed. Andrlé (1997) analysed the migration between core cities and their suburban areas (defined as surrounding administrative districts) in the first half of the 1990s. He concluded that from about 1991 to 1993, all observed core cities were losing population through a migration exchange with their hinterlands. The negative balance was due to the increasing out-migration from the core cities and the stable immigration from suburban zones to core cities. More interestingly, Andrlé analysed the reasons for the migration. The most often quoted reason for moving into the city was a change of job, followed by a move closer to the place of employment. On the other hand, the most often cited reasons for moving out of the core city were an improvement in housing conditions or health reasons.

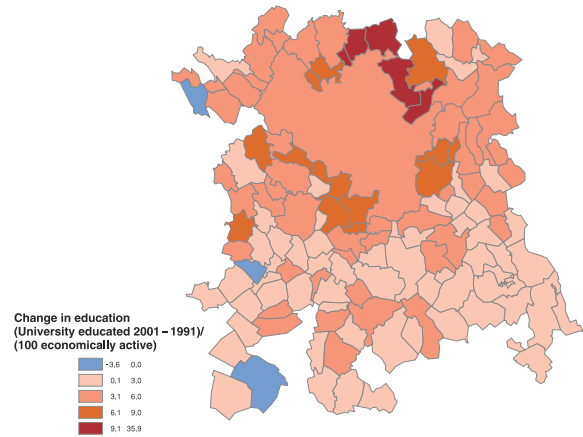
Who is leaving the core cities? The answer is far from easy to determine in the Czech context. Participant observation led us to the conclusion that there are at least three distinct groups of migrants: relatively rich residents of new single-family homes in the suburban areas, low-income or middle-income young families that could not afford the rents on the free market in the core city, and the (mostly) pensioners who converted their cottages and vacation houses into permanent residences (Bičík, 2001, Havrlant, 2004a, 2004b) while leaving their city flats at the disposal of their children or renting the vacant flats on the free market. While the migration of the first mentioned group is clearly visible, the migration of the other groups is hard to register officially because it is usually not connected with a change in people's official permanent residence. Only the first group fit well with the classic image of the North American suburban resident. Research (Ouředníček, 2002; Mulíček, Olšová, 2002) shows that the inhabitants of newly constructed single-family homes are usually highly educated couples in their thirties or forties, with or without children, and with incomes high above the average. These research results can also be indirectly supported by the following set of maps.

Maps 6a to 6d. The increase in the share of university-educated people in the population of the core cities and the individual municipalities in the suburban areas in the four largest Czech metropolitan areas between 1991 and 2001

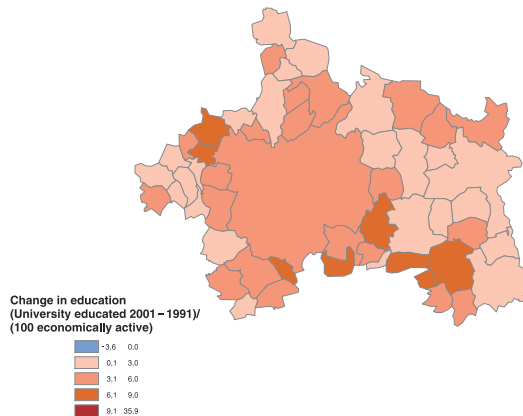
a) Prague



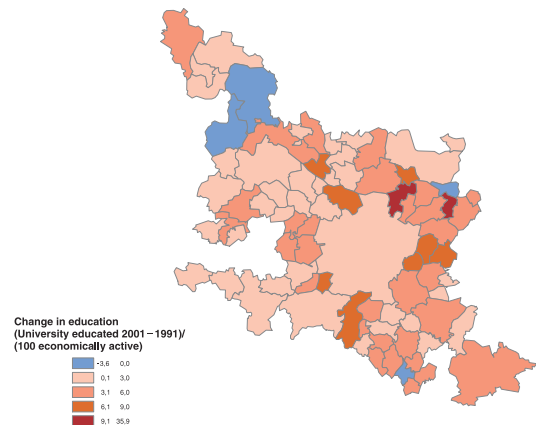
b) Brno



c) Ostrava



d) Pilsen



Source: Own computations based on Census 1991 and Census 2001, Czech Statistical Office.

The maps show the overall increase in the share of university-educated people in the population in the entire metropolitan areas, which basically follows the general national trend. More interesting is that in all observed cases the rise was more intensive outside the core cities, specifically in the suburban municipalities with the highest population growth (compare maps 5 with maps 6). Despite the fact that the overall educational level of suburban municipalities is still lower than that of the core cities, the social status of selected municipalities in the suburban areas is evidently increasing through the inflow of highly educated immigrants.

In the context of the Czech Republic the introduction of the free market into housing and land use, which usually precedes the social-spatial polarisation, was to a significant extent inhibited by the fact that the post-communist governments maintained rather strict rent regulation. Taking into account that many old and rather poor pensioners lived in the downtowns of large cities, and trying to prevent the social disturbances that could possibly be connected with quick rent liberalisation, the government decided not only to maintain rent control in the municipal and state rental houses but also to impose it on the restituted housing stock. Rent regulation was not sensitive to either regional differences or the different degrees of attractiveness of different neighborhoods within cities. Regulated rent generally increased with the population size of a municipality, but did not distinguish prosperous and declining cities of the same size. Although municipal councils had the right to increase or decrease the level of regulated rent to some extent in different parts of the city in relation to the attractiveness of the individual neighbourhoods, the absolute majority of municipal councils did not use that power. Thus, inside the cities regulated rent remained mostly the same. The most important by-product of rent regulation was the appearance of a dual rental market. In addition to the sector with regulated rents, the unregulated rental sector came into existence. This included rents in all single-family homes, rental contracts with all tenants not citizens of the Czech Republic, all new rental contracts signed between landlords and tenants after 1994, and also the illegal sub-renting of rental flats with regulated rents by tenants to 'subtenants' for the market price.

Research conducted on free market prices in the unregulated rental sector documented very high spatial differences in market rents, both among different regions (Kostelecký 2000) and within cities (Kostelecký, Nedomová, Vajdová, 1997). In this respect, the market rents were very similar to the prices of building lots as well as to the prices of both new and older flats in private ownership, and to the prices of cooperative flats, that were fully liberalised and no longer subject to any type of state regulation. The research also indicated very large differences between the price levels of market rents and regulated rents. In the extreme case of downtown Prague, the market rent was up to twenty times higher than the regulated rents in the same neighbourhood in the first half of the 1990s. On the other hand, in some other large cities (including Ostrava) that were experiencing a rapid decline in local industry and were faced with a corresponding rise in unemployment, the market rent exceeded the regulated rent by only about 20% to 50%. Although the regulated rents increased during the 1990s more rapidly than general inflation (Lux et al. 2003), while the formerly extremely high market rent prices stagnated or even decreased during the second half of the 1990s, the price gap between these two rental sectors was maintained and remained considerable, particularly in the most prestigious locations of the most attractive cities.

The persistence of rent regulation substantially influenced both the suburbanisation and the development of socio-spatial patterns in the core cities. Confronted with the problem of finding affordable rental housing in the free market sector within the core city of Prague, many young poorer families opted to move out of the city. These migrants to the suburban zone, however, were not looking for better housing in the form of a single-family home with garden, but sought more affordable housing in terms of cheaper rent. This demand was usually concentrated in the bigger municipalities, which have a higher share of multi-storey buildings with rentable flats. Some of the poorer households tend to buy very old deteriorated houses at greater distances from the central city, or the move to cottages that they can reside in permanently. The migration of that kind of group, however, is not usually covered in official migration statistics, as it is often not connected with a change of permanent residence.

Despite the fact that spatial patterns of migration were clearly socially selective, as the high prices of private and cooperative flats and the high market rents prevented the poorer households from moving into the attractive parts of the cities, the absolute majority of flats in the downtowns remained rental, most of them still with regulated rents. So, although downtowns and some other parts of the core city with a good address have been undergoing a limited but visible gentrification, inhabitants who had lived in these gentrified areas even before 1989 still represent the majority or at least a substantial part of the local population. The actual composition of local inhabitants in traditionally the most attractive parts of the cities thus represents a mixture of people of different social status, education, wealth and age. Migration to the new multi-storey housing developments within the central city was also clearly more socially selective, as it was reserved almost exclusively for the younger households with high education and incomes (Kostelecký, Lux, 2003). These migration flows, however, only changed the social structure in micro-locations and have not yet caused changes in the social structures of whole city quarters owing to the generally low number of newly constructed flats. Similarly, continued rent regulation has thus far prevented the spatial segregation of the poor and the appearance of ethnically segregated neighbourhoods on a larger scale⁵ due to the fact that it generally decreases mobility within the city. There is no incentive for households who occupy rental flats with regulated rent to move out as any migration could mean a substantial increase in housing costs. In fact, it is quite difficult for such tenants to move as they risk the possible loss of their favourable legal status. Even the pre-fab housing estates that were built during the Communist times did not lose much of their image as a living place for ordinary (read: average) people.

⁵ In some Czech cities, mainly those in the industrial region of Northwest Bohemia, the embryonic stages have appeared of neighbourhoods that could potentially evolve into larger concentrations of poor Romany. The core of such a neighbourhood was usually created unintentionally by the policies of the respective municipal councils, which moved tenants who had not paid the rent in municipal flats (with a high share of Romany among them) from all over the city to one neighbourhood with municipal flats of substandard quality. There are no such neighbourhoods in the observed four cities so far.

3. Metropolitan Change after Communist and Political Behaviour – Any Connections?

Do the observed patterns of metropolitan change in the Czech Republic influence the political behaviour of citizens? If yes, in what direction and to what extent? To answer these questions on the basis of an overview of existing literature is not possible, as there is virtually no relevant scientific literature in the Czech Republic that deals with the above-posed question. It is interesting that even the most comprehensive works dealing with the changes within individual metropolitan areas (Ouředníček, 2002) or with the process of suburbanisation itself (Sýkora, 2002) do not cover the political behaviour of citizens. On the other hand, changes in political behaviour after the fall of Communism naturally attracted a good deal of attention from scientists in various fields, and consequently there is quite a good deal of relevant literature on this topic (Kitchelt et al., 1999; Brokl et al., 1997; 1999; Matějů, Řeháková, 1997; Matějů, Vlachová, 1998; Matějů, Řeháková, Evans, 1999; Vlachová 1999; 2001; Kostecký, 2002; Mansfeldová, 1998; 2003), but none of it deals with the metropolitan areas, as the spatial unit of observation has been the Czech Republic as a whole. The efforts of those scientists who were inclined to study post-Communist changes on the sub-national level (Heřmanová, Vajdová, 1991; Heřmanová, Illner, Vajdová, 1992; Dostál, et al, 1992; Baldersheim et al, 1996; Vajdová, Kostecký, 1997; Illner 1999a; 1999b; Vajdová 1995; 1997; 1999; 2003) usually concentrated on development at the local level in general, the changes in territorial administration, or focused on conducting case studies in smaller municipalities.

There is only a limited amount of scientific literature that concentrates directly on the relationship between political behaviour and space. Voting patterns from the first free post-Communist parliamentary elections in 1990 were analysed by Blažek and Kostecký (1991) in connection with the structural factors underlying the observed spatial differences in both participation rate and voting support for the parties. Jehlička and Sýkora (1991) compared voting patterns of traditional political parties from the 1990 parliamentary elections with voting patterns in the pre-Communist elections, concluding that a high level of time-space stability in voting behaviour and party identification existed despite the forty-year period without any proper elections. Both studies, however, concentrated on the regional level and used the administrative districts as the main unit of observation. The regional differences in voting behaviour were then studied rather regularly after each consecutive parliamentary election (Kostecký, 1994; 1995a; 1995b; 1996a; 2001; 2003; Sokol, 2003), but the key topic of study continued to be the differences among regions (districts) and the underlying factors explaining them. The research results repeatedly confirmed the rather high level of time-space stability of voting behavior both in terms of voting participation and the support for individual political parties. It was also documented that the importance of economic underlying factors in the explanation of voting patterns is generally growing, while the influence of historical, religious, and cultural factors remains considerable.

In some rare cases, researchers studied voting patterns on the level of individual municipalities. Daněk (1993) analysed the voting patterns in parliamentary elections in Moravia in a search for links between political affiliation and ethnic awareness in southern Moravia. Later (Daněk 2002) he

also conducted a thorough study of political behaviour in the borderland regions, with emphasis on the differences between the areas that were formerly dominated by the German population and resettled by new immigrants after 1946, and the areas that had stable populations. Kostelecký (1993) analysed the results of the parliamentary elections in 1990 in cities that were defined as municipalities with more than 5000 inhabitants. A typology of cities based on electoral results showed that both the population size of a city and its geographical location were important factors influencing the voting behaviour of inhabitants. Generally, people living in larger cities tended to vote for more rightwing oriented parties and participated less in elections, while people living in smaller cities were politically more leftwing oriented and tended to participate more. However, the differences among groups of cities located in different regions tended to be larger than those based on differences in population size.

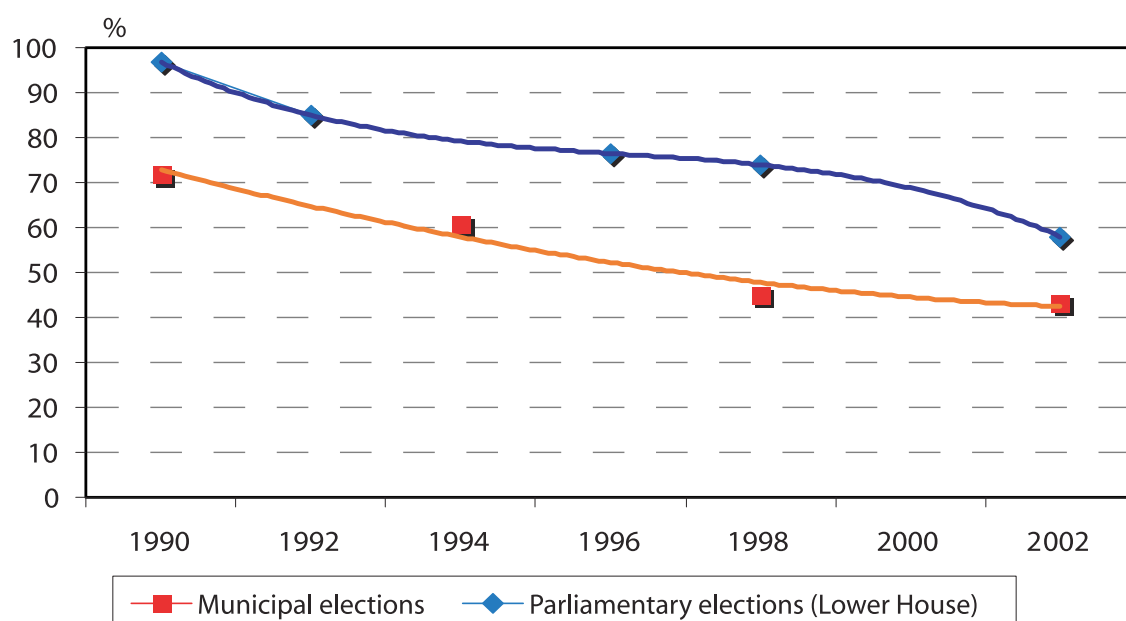
Similarly, an analysis was also conducted of the results of the election in 548 municipalities located in selected districts representing different types of political environments. The findings supported the previous findings. Generally, the regional differences were found to be more important than the population size of the municipalities. Municipalities located in the same territory tended to be politically more similar to each other than to the structurally and functionally comparable municipalities located in other regions. It should be noted here, however, that these conclusions were based on an analysis of the early post-Communist parliamentary elections, in a situation characterised by quite low social differentiation and the little experience voters had with democratic procedures and also with the negative consequences of the forthcoming economic reforms. Kostelecký and Kroupa (1996) and Kostelecký (1996b) studied the results of local elections in 1990 and 1994. Their research proved that the population size of municipalities is an important factor that affects the political behaviour of citizens in local elections as well: generally, the larger the municipality, the lower the participation rate and the higher the inclination to vote for rightwing parties. A specific feature of municipal elections was the inability of political parties to take place in the electoral contests in small villages due to the lack of active membership there. In the absolute majority of the smallest municipalities the political parties are unable to take part in the local elections at all, leaving space for the ad hoc generation of candidate lists filled with independent candidates.

In a recently completed project, attention was devoted to an analysis of the influence of territorially specific factors on the formation of the political orientation of voters (Kostelecký, Čermák, 2003). Large sociological surveys on political behaviour were conducted in four model regions, which by chance roughly covered two of the four metropolitan areas elaborated on in this text (Prague, Ostrava). The influence of contextual and compositional explanatory variables was analysed. It was demonstrated that both types of factors are of approximately the same importance. Political values, attitudes, and actual electoral behaviour depend both on the personal characteristics of the respondents (class, age, gender, education, marriage status, etc.) and the territorial context within which respondents live (the average unemployment rate in the district of residence, the share of university educated, share of Catholics, etc.). It should be noted here, however, that the spatial context, within which the analysed political attitudes were formed and political decisions were made, was defined on the regional level of the administrative district rather than on the micro-level of individual municipalities or city neighbourhoods. The collected survey data also did not allow for studying respondents' answers according to a detailed indication of the place of a respondent's residence.

The preliminary analysis of participation in the municipal elections in four observed metropolitan areas based on available data from the 1994 and 1998 elections have shown that the political

effects connected with North American-type suburbanisation were not present (yet?). Participation in the election was generally decreasing throughout the 1990s; participation in the municipal elections was generally lower than participation in the parliamentary elections (see next chart).

Chart 11. Participation rates in the parliamentary and municipal elections in the Czech Republic after 1989



Source: Czech Statistical Office.

Participation in the municipal elections in the metropolitan areas also declined between 1994 and 1998. It seemed to follow the general trend that can be observed throughout the Czech Republic: participation in small suburban municipalities is constantly higher than participation in the big core cities (see Table 5).

Table 5. Participation in the local elections in metropolitan areas (core cities and suburban zones) in the Czech Republic in 1994 and 1998

	1994	1998	1998-1994
Prague core city	53,7	39,1	-14,7
Prague suburban area	69,5	55,7	-13,9
Brno core city	57,7	39,0	-18,7
Brno suburban area	74,0	61,1	-12,9
Ostrava core city	50,8	30,7	-20,1
Ostrava suburban area	54,4	36,8	-17,6
Pilsen core city	55,2	35,7	-19,5
Pilsen suburban area	72,1	57,7	-14,5

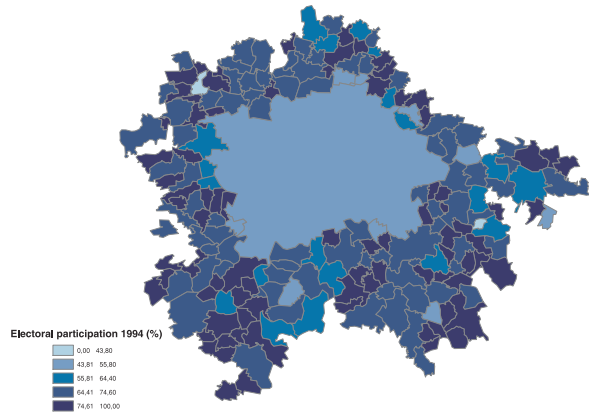
Source: Own calculations based on electoral data from Czech Statistical Office.

3. Metropolitan Change after Communist and Political Behaviour – Any Connections?

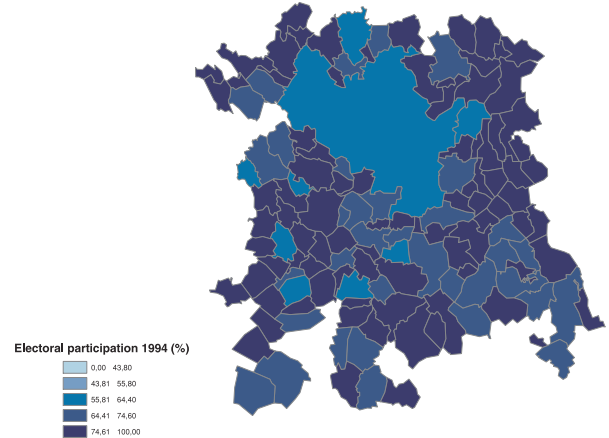
The following maps provide detailed information about participation in the municipal elections in both 1994 and 1998 and about the change in participation levels between 1994 and 1998.

Maps 7a to 7d. The participation rate in the municipal elections in the core cities and the individual municipalities in the suburban areas in the Czech metropolitan areas in 1994

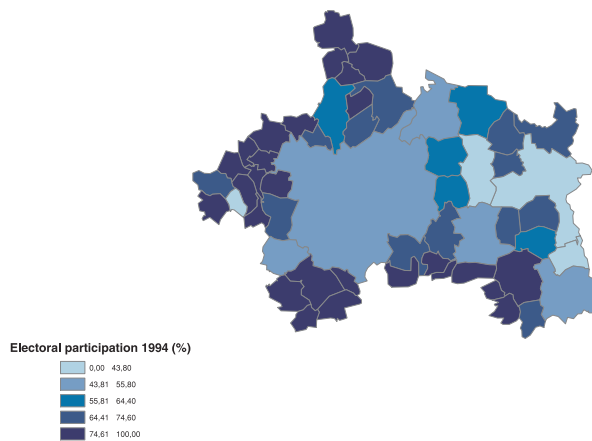
a) Prague



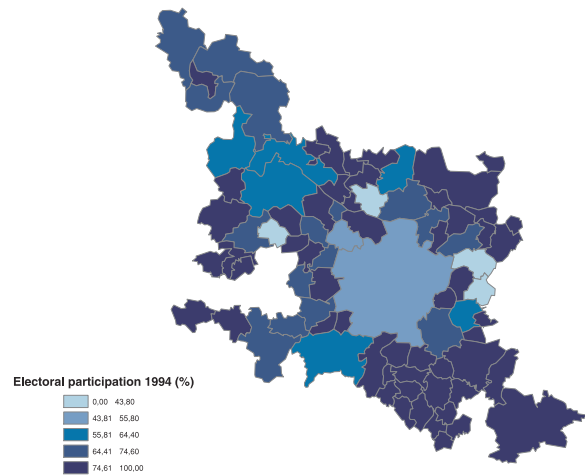
b) Brno



c) Ostrava



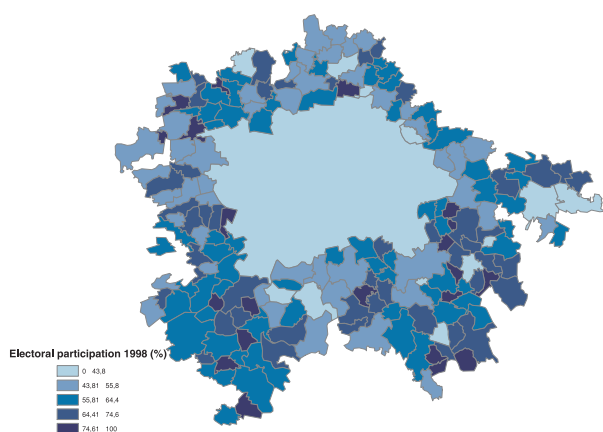
d) Pilsen



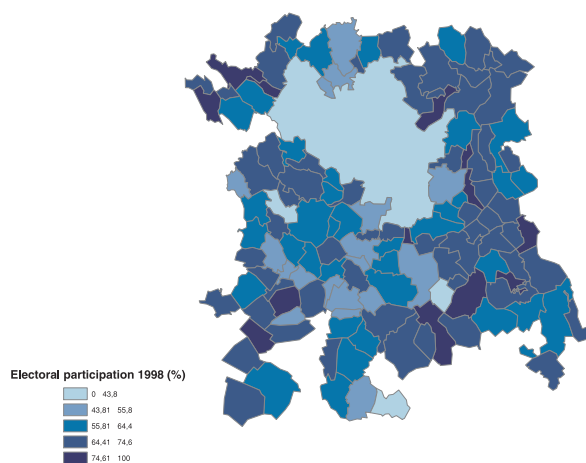
Source: Own calculations based on data from Czech Statistical Office.

Maps 8a to 8d. The participation rate in the municipal elections in the core cities and the individual municipalities in the suburban areas in the Czech metropolitan areas in 1998

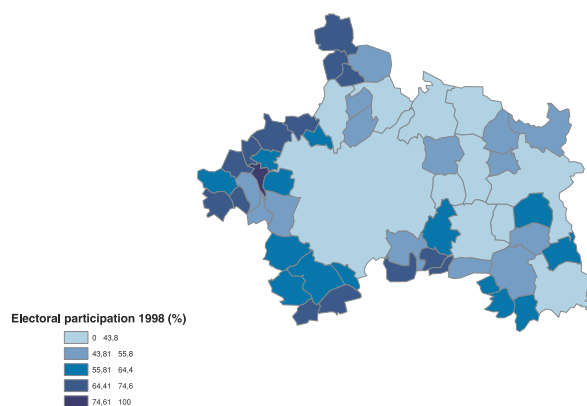
a) Prague



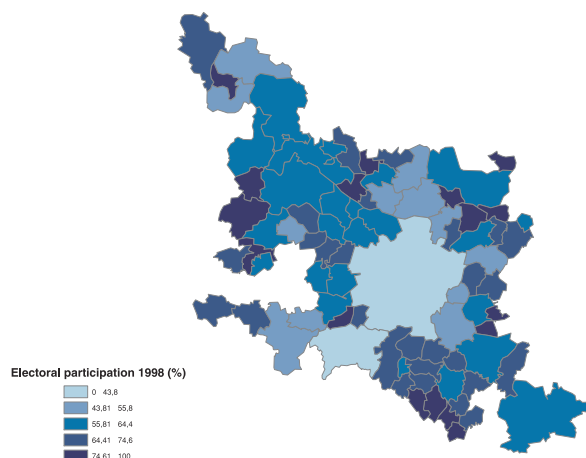
b) Brno



c) Ostrava



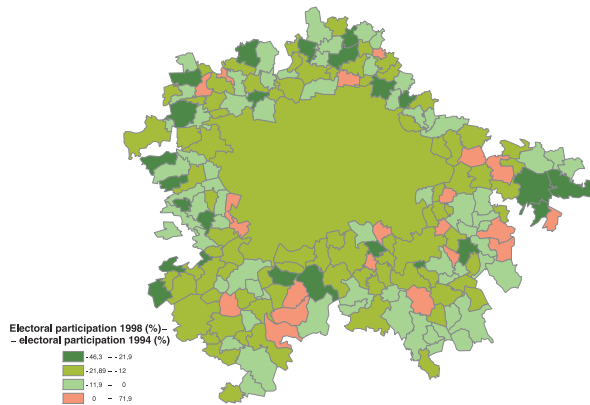
d) Pilsen



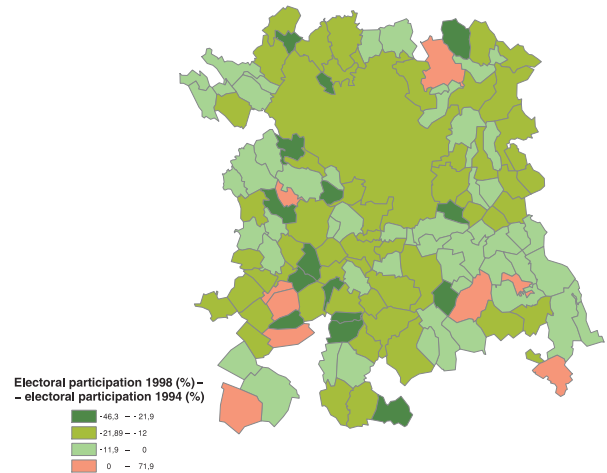
Source: Own calculations based on data from Czech Statistical Office.

Maps 9a to 9d. The change in the participation rate in the municipal elections in the core cities and the individual municipalities in the suburban areas in the Czech metropolitan areas between 1994 and 1998

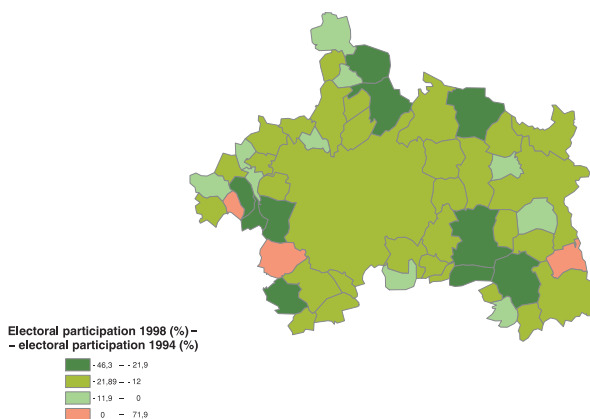
a) Prague



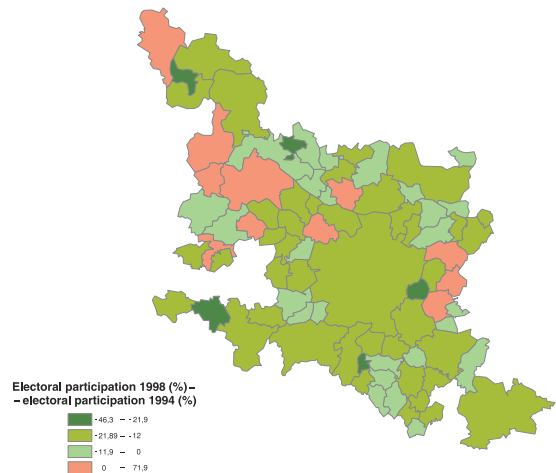
b) Brno



c) Ostrava



d) Pilsen



Source: Own calculations based on data from Czech Statistical Office.

The maps document the general decline in electoral participation between 1994 and 1998, but they do not suggest the existence of any particular spatial pattern of participation. However, it is necessary in any case to study more available electoral data before conclusions can be made with regard to political behaviour in the metropolitan areas.

4. Conclusions

Lacking any official definition of the metropolitan area, we had to develop our own definition. Four metropolitan areas were delineated in the Czech Republic on the basis of the population size of the core cities and commuting patterns. Three of four metropolitan areas are typical nodal structures, dominated by the large core city surrounded by a large number of small suburban municipalities. The fourth one is rather the conurbation of several larger industrial cities surrounded by larger residential developments. The socio-spatial structures of the metropolitan areas do not fit the North American model too well. Generally, the social differences both within the core cities themselves and between the core cities and their suburban areas are relatively small. Moreover, the inhabitants of the core cities tend to be of higher social status than those living in the suburban zones. This is a direct consequence of developments under the Communist regime. Under the Communist equalisation policy, social structures were flattened. Urban planning and housing policy prevented the development of suburbanisation. After the fall of the Communist regime, the first signs of suburbanisation development soon appeared, but the suburbanisation process has not yet been intensive enough for it to be able to radically change pre-existing structures. Continuing state regulation of rents is the major factor preventing the development of socio-spatial inequalities within the core cities. The consequences of suburbanisation for potential changes in political behaviour have not yet been studied. The preliminary results of the research on municipal elections in the metropolitan areas do not suggest any particular effect of suburbanisation on the decreasing political participation in suburban municipalities.

It is evident that current analyses could be much improved if more relevant data on the municipal level were available. Therefore, more data on the municipal level have to be collected and analysed, particularly the results of the municipal elections in 2002. In that respect more data on social structures at the municipal level from the Census 2001 could also be useful. Such analyses take some time and effort, but they are manageable, as more data could be obtained from the Czech Statistical Office. Methodologically, a set of case studies in the suburban municipalities with the highest share of new inhabitants immigrating to them would be a useful tool for understanding the political consequences of suburbanisation in detail. A typology of suburban municipalities based on the characteristics of current developments would help provide a better understanding of the whole process. It would also be useful to pose the question of whether mass suburbanisation is probable in a situation of general population decline, falling birth rates, and the decline of the traditional family? And, of course, more attention should be paid to the political consequences of suburbanisation. Should we expect increasing political participation in suburban municipalities due to the influx of more educated people, or decreased political participation as a consequence of the social homogenisation of individual suburban municipalities? Should we expect more inter-municipal conflicts including conflicts between suburban municipalities and the core cities, or a development of municipal cooperation schemes within the metropolitan areas?

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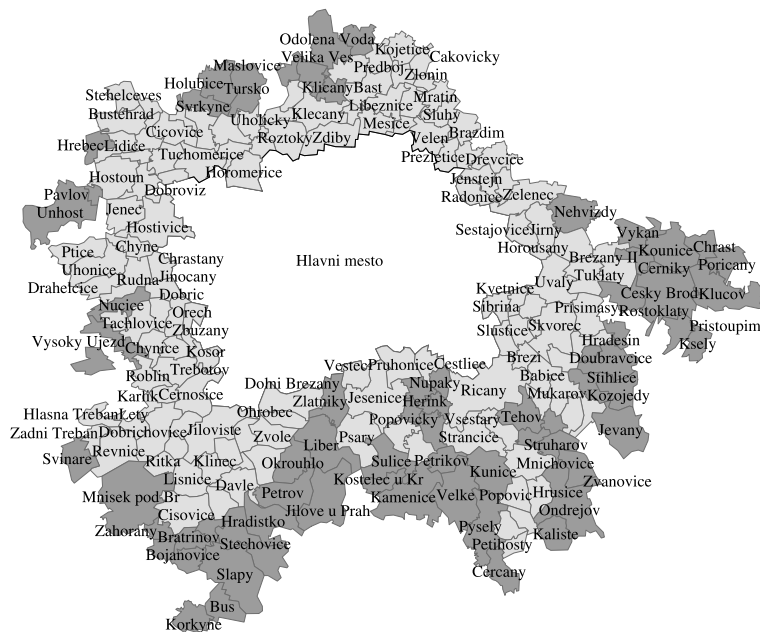
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Appendix

Maps 1a to 1d. The names of the municipalities

a) Prague



b) Brno



c) Ostrava



d) Pilsen



Summary

This study is the outcome of the first stage of research on political changes in metropolitan areas conducted by a Czech team as part of the International Metropolitan Observatory Project (IMO). In the first part of the study the authors examine the problem of defining metropolitan areas, providing an overview of the definitions that have been used over the course of the 20th century in the Czech lands and summarising the main principles behind them. Given the fact that in the Czech Republic there is currently no official definition of metropolitan areas, criteria for their delineation were developed by taking into account available data and the existing definitions of metropolitan areas in other countries participating in the IMO project. The definition of a metropolitan area used here refers to cities with a population of more than 200 000, which in the Czech Republic applies to the cities of Prague, Brno, Ostrava and Pilsen. The greater metropolitan area around the core of the city was delineated in accordance with international recommendations on the basis of commuting intensity.

In the second part of the study the authors outline the basic characteristics of the provisionally defined metropolitan areas. A description is made of the population development of the city cores of the metropolitan areas and the related socio-spatial evolution, and the causes and consequences of these developments are examined. The basic structural features of current metropolitan areas are presented in an internationally comparable format and contain data on their populations and population density, full area, and breakdown into administrative units. For all the metropolitan areas a comparison is made of the basic socio-economic and demographic characteristics of their city cores and their greater surrounding areas, and the main trends in terms of migration and commuting and the related socio-spatial changes are also studied. Special attention is devoted to changes in the metropolitan areas in the post-communist period, particularly to the changing function of city cores and especially of the communities that lie within the greater metropolitan areas. Changes are documented with regard to housing, demographic behaviour, and migration. The sharp decline in birth rates in the 1990s, connected with the change in the predominant direction of migration, brought about a relatively quick transition from the phase of urbanisation typical for the Czech metropolises up until the beginning of the 1990s to the phase of suburbanisation wherein more people move out of large city centres and into their surrounding areas than do the reverse. The data moreover indicate evidence of social selectivity with regard to migration into the surrounding areas of city cores, demonstrated, for example, in the rapidly growing numbers of post-secondary students in suburban communities with the largest rates of population growth. Although in this respect the process of suburbanisation is very similar to the 'typical' North American model, in many other features it differs significantly. The extent and intensity of suburbanisation in particular are considerably lower in the Czech Republic than in North America. Suburbanisation does not therefore lead to the same kind of socio-spatial segregation of different ethnic and social groups.

In the concluding part of the study the authors provide a summary of the results of the research conducted to date on the relationship between political (voting) behaviour and space. Selected aspects of the political behaviour of the populations in metropolitan areas are observed in relation to their socio-spatial evolution. Analyses to date of data from the years 1994 and 1998 do not indicate that suburbanisation has led to any decline in the participation of inhabitants of suburban residential areas in politics. The decline in voting participation is rather more general, and it does not demonstrate any relationship to socio-spatial changes.

Shrnutí

Text představuje výsledek první fáze práce českého týmu na projektu výzkumu politických změn v metropolitních oblastech, který je organizován v rámci mezinárodního výzkumného konsorcia International Metropolitan Observatory Project (IMO). Text se nejdříve zabývá problémem definice metropolitních oblastí, podává přehled definic metropolitních oblastí používaných v průběhu 20. století v českých zemích a shrnuje jejich hlavní principy. Protože v současné době neexistuje v České republice žádná oficiální definice metropolitních oblastí, byla vyvinuta vlastní definice kompatibilní s kritérii IMO projektu. Mezi metropolitní oblasti byla zahrnuta města, která měla i se zázemím více než 200 000 obyvatel. V českém kontextu šlo konkrétně o města Praha, Brno, Ostrava a Plzeň. Zázemí těchto jádrových měst bylo v souladu s mezinárodním doporučením vymezeno na základě intenzity dojížděky.

V další části textu je podán přehled o vývoji základních charakteristik takto vymezených metropolitních oblastí. Je popsán populační vývoj jádrových měst metropolitních oblastí a s tím související sociálně-prostorový vývoj a zkoumány jeho příčiny a důsledky. V mezinárodně komparovatelné podobě jsou prezentovány základní strukturální charakteristiky metropolitních oblastí v současné době – údaje o jejich populaci, rozloze, hustotě obyvatel i administrativní fragmentaci. U všech metropolitních oblastí jsou porovnávány základní sociálněekonomické a demografické charakteristiky jádrových měst a jejich příslušných zázemí a studovány trendy, pokud jde migraci a dojížděku a s tím související sociálně-prostorové změny. Zvláštní pozornost je věnována změnám v metropolitních oblastech v období po pádu komunismu, zvláště pak měnícím se funkcím jádrových měst a především obcí v jejich zázemí. Jsou dokumentovány změny v oblasti bydlení, změny demografického chování i migrace. Prudký pokles porodnosti v 90. letech spojený se změnou směru převažující migrace způsobil relativně rychlý přechod z fáze urbanizace typické pro české metropole až do počátku 90. let do fáze suburbanizace, při níž se více lidí stěhuje z velkých měst do jejich zázemí, než je tomu naopak. Data navíc ukazují, že stěhování do zázemí je sociálně selektivní a projevuje se například rychle rostoucím podílem vysokoškoláků v příměstských obcích s nejrychlejším růstem obyvatel. Ačkoliv je proces suburbanizace v tomto ohledu velmi podobný „klasickému“ severoamerickému modelu suburbanizace, v mnoha jiných rysech se od něj významně liší. Především je to rozsahem a intenzitou suburbanizace, které jsou v České republice řádově menší než v Severní Americe. Suburbanizace proto ani nevede k tak velké sociálně-prostorové segregaci odlišných etnik a sociálních tříd.

V závěrečné části textu je nejprve podán přehled o výsledcích dosud provedených studií o souvislosti mezi politickým (volebním) chováním a prostorem. Poté jsou studovány vybrané aspekty politického chování obyvatel metropolitních oblastí ve vztahu k jejich sociálně-prostorovému vývoji. Analýzy dosud zpracovaných dat z let 1994 a 1998 nepotvrzují, že by suburbanizace vedla ke snížené participaci obyvatel předměstských residenčních oblastí v politice. Pokles volební účasti je dosti všeobecný a nevykazuje souvislosti se změnami sociálně-prostorového uspořádání.

Zusammenfassung

Der Text stellt das Ergebnis der ersten Arbeitsphase eines tschechischen Teams vor, das im Rahmen des internationalen Forschungskonsortiums Metropolitan Observatory Project (IMO) an einem Projekt zur Untersuchung politischer Veränderungen in Metropolregionen arbeitet. Der Text beschäftigt sich zunächst mit dem Problem der Definition von Metropolregionen, gibt einen Überblick über die Definitionen, die im Laufe des 20. Jahrhunderts im tschechischen Kontext verwendet wurden, und fasst ihre Hauptprinzipien zusammen. Da zur Zeit in der Tschechischen Republik keine offizielle Definition von Metropolregionen existiert, wurde eine eigene Definition entwickelt, die mit den Kriterien des IMO-Projekts kompatibel ist. Unter dem Begriff "Metropolregionen" wurden Städte zusammengefasst, die einschließlich Umland mehr als 200 000 Einwohner haben. Im Bezug auf Tschechien sind dies konkret die Städte Prag, Brunn, Ostrau und Pilsen. Das Umland dieser Kernstädte wurde in Übereinstimmung mit einer internationalen Empfehlung auf der Grundlage der Pendelintensität definiert.

Anschließend wird ein Überblick über die Entwicklung der Hauptmerkmale der so definierten Metropolregionen gegeben. Es werden die Populationsentwicklung der Kernstädte der Metropolregionen und die damit verbundene sozialräumliche Entwicklung beschrieben sowie deren Ursachen und Folgen untersucht. In einer international vergleichenden Form werden die grundlegenden strukturellen Merkmale von Metropolregionen in der Gegenwart vorgestellt, also Angaben über ihre Population, Fläche, Bevölkerungsdichte und administrative Fragmentierung. Bei allen Metropolregionen werden die grundlegenden sozio-ökonomischen und demographischen Merkmale der Kernstädte und des dazugehörigen Umlandes miteinander verglichen und Trends bei Migration und Pendlerverkehr sowie die damit zusammenhängenden sozialräumlichen Veränderungen untersucht. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit wird den Veränderungen in den Metropolregionen in der Zeit nach dem Sturz des Kommunismus gewidmet, insbesondere den sich verändernden Funktionen der Kernstädte und vor allem der Gemeinden in ihrem Umfeld. Es werden Veränderungen im Bereich Wohnen, im demographischen Verhalten und bei der Migration dokumentiert. Das rasante Absinken der Geburtenzahlen in den 90er Jahren verbunden mit einer Veränderung der Richtung der vorherrschenden Migration verursachten einen relativ raschen Übergang von der Phase der Urbanisierung, die für die tschechischen Metropolregionen bis zum Anfang der 90er Jahre typisch war, zur Phase der Suburbanisierung, in der mehr Menschen aus den Großstädten in deren Umland ziehen als umgekehrt. Die Daten zeigen darüber hinaus, dass der Trend, in das Umland der Städte zu ziehen, sozial selektiv wirkt und sich zum Beispiel am schnell wachsenden Anteil an Akademikern in den Vororten mit einer raschen Bevölkerungszunahme zeigt. Obwohl der Prozess der Suburbanisierung in dieser Hinsicht dem "klassischen" nordamerikanischen Modell der Suburbanisierung sehr ähnlich ist, unterscheidet er sich davon in vielen anderen Zügen erheblich, insbesondere in Umfang und Intensität der Suburbanisierung, die in der Tschechischen Republik in der Regel geringer ausfallen als in Nordamerika. Die Suburbanisierung führt deshalb auch nicht zu einer so großen sozialräumlichen Segregation verschiedener ethnischer Gruppen und sozialer Klassen.

Im abschließenden Teil des Textes wird zunächst ein Überblick über die Ergebnisse der bislang durchgeführten Studien im Zusammenhang mit dem politischen (Wahl-) Verhalten und dem Raum gegeben. Danach werden ausgewählte Aspekte des politischen Verhaltens der Bewohner der Metropolregionen im Verhältnis zur sozialräumlichen Entwicklung untersucht. Die Analysen der bisher

verarbeiteten Daten aus den Jahren 1994 und 1998 bestätigen nicht, dass die Suburbanisierung zu einer geringeren Partizipation der Bevölkerung in den Vororten an der Politik führen würde. Das Absinken der Wahlbeteiligung ist ein allgemein verbreitetes Phänomen und weist keinen Zusammenhang mit den Veränderungen der sozialräumlichen Struktur auf.

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Tomáš Kostelecký, Daniel Čermák

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